

**International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH)
Ecumenical Center for Human Rights (CEDH)**

Press Release

Haiti: Human Security in Danger

Paris – Port-au-Prince, 12 November 2012. FIDH and its member organisations in Haiti, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) and the Ecumenical Center for Human Rights (CEDH), today publish an alarming report into the persistent human insecurity in Haiti, despite the exceptional humanitarian efforts made since the earthquake of 12 January 2010.

Almost three years after this disaster, more than 80% of the population still lives below the poverty line, in a situation of extreme precariousness that Hurricane Sandy has only aggravated. For the roughly 370,000 victims of the earthquake still living in displaced person camps, the situation deteriorates by the day: living conditions in the camps are shameful and getting worse; forced expulsions are common for camps situated on private land; populations are abandoned by NGOs and are extremely vulnerable. In the deteriorating and degrading environment of these camps, violence is on the increase, with women and children particularly vulnerable to sex crimes.

The report deplores the fact that the remedies so far proffered to earthquake victims are inadequate and precarious, and have displaced rather than resolved the problems. This is all the more shocking because the international community had committed to providing massive aid for rebuilding the country in the aftermath of the deadly earthquake that shook the entire nation (around 300,000 killed and more than 1.5 million displaced).

This alarm call on the fate of the most vulnerable in the camps also concerns the extension of poverty and social exclusion throughout the country. Here too it must be said that human security persists and worsens, particularly food insecurity... and this situation was brought about not by chance, but by the national economic policy choices largely determined by international decision-makers.

"In the short term, public policy cannot guarantee the people's access to fundamental rights, particularly their rights to housing, food, healthcare and education," commented Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

This lack of access to fundamental rights is compounded by persistent legal insecurity, which is particularly flagrant in prisons and the dysfunctional police and legal system. This is another feature dealt with in the report.

Around 70% of prison inmates are being held under prolonged pre-trial detention, some of them for several years now, with no access to legal assistance. Prison living conditions are inhuman and degrading. With squalid and overcrowded prisons, 275 inmates have died of cholera since the outbreak of October 2010.

Since the start of 2012, insecurity has been on the increase, with multiple kidnappings and a rise in firearm murders, particularly in the metropolitan area. Despite the launch of an effort to clean up the Haitian National Police (PNH), some of its officers are still involved in criminal activities or human rights violations.

Ongoing impunity, inadequate access to justice and persistent corruption can be blamed on the serious deficiencies of the legal system. In addition, although the Supreme Council of the Judiciary (CSPJ) was set up in July 2012, FIDH, RNDDH and CEDH have expressed concerns over its impartiality and independence, on account of persistent interference by the executive in the judicial system. In addition, the judge's order prescribing the charges against former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier for genocide and crimes against humanity raises serious doubts about the willingness of the Haitian justice system to condemn the abuses committed during the dictatorship.

In this context, the report also highlights the questions being asked on the role of MINUSTAH, the UN Mission responsible for maintaining peace and security in Haiti.

The results of its operations have been very mixed and have provoked much criticism within the country. Following the renewal of its mandate for one year on 12 October 2012 by the UN Security Council, FIDH, RNDDH and CEDH welcome the reduction in military personnel as well as the request that countries

supplying personnel should investigate and punish any questionable actions by their nationals.

After this survey of the most serious threats to human security in its various areas, FIDH, RNDDH and CEDH wish to send a message to the key national and international decision-makers who, to various degrees, have the power to reform, transform and drive the policies needed to meet the challenges of rebuilding Haiti and establishing the rule of law.

To this end, the report sets out a series of concrete recommendations, including the following priorities:

To the Haitian authorities

- Guarantee decent conditions for rehousing and long-term support for displaced people who still live in camps
- Implement the precautionary measures requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on 16 November 2010 against forced expulsions
- Implement the precautionary measures requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on 22 November 2010 to help displaced women and girls
- Take the necessary measures to reduce prison overcrowding and ensure decent conditions of incarceration
- Ensure that those being held under prolonged pre-trial detention are brought to trial and provide legal assistance to all facing charges
- Complete the training of the National Police and the process of overhauling the PNH
- Reject impunity for Jean-Claude Duvalier: may he be tried and sentenced on appeal for the crimes against humanity committed under his regime
- Launch an effort to honour the memory of victims of the dictatorship

To the international community

- Support and reinforce the country's democratic institutions and help combat corrupt practices
- Ensure greater coordination between public and private agents involved in reconstruction and development projects, favouring sustainable solutions that link in the populations involved
- Implement these projects in consultation and partnership with Haitian civil society

To the UN Security Council

- Call on MINUSTAH to admit its responsibility in triggering the cholera epidemic, and set up a standing committee for claims
- Require MINUSTAH to communicate publicly on the follow-up to procedures involving repatriated soldiers and the proceedings launched against them, by virtue of the zero-tolerance policy
- Recommend that the Status-of-Forces Agreement between the UN and the Haitian government be amended to ensure that MINUSTAH soldiers responsible for human rights violations are brought before a common-law court in their country of origin

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