

URGENT ACTION

STOP EVICTIONS OF HOMELESS HAITIANS

Since 23 May, more than 300 homeless families have been forcibly evicted from two makeshift camps in the Delmas municipality of Port-au-Prince, continuing what seems to be a wave of forced evictions in the Haitian capital. Hundreds more are facing imminent eviction in the next three months.

On 23 May, the Delmas municipal authorities and officers from the Haitian National Police forcibly evicted families occupying a public square known as “*Place Carrefour Aéroport*” (Airport Junction Square) at the intersection of Delmas Road and Toussaint Louverture Avenue, in Port-au-Prince. On 25 May, 144 families at camp “Assistance Plus”, on Delmas 3 Road, were also evicted by the municipal authorities with the assistance of police officers. These families were among hundreds of thousands who had been left homeless by the January 2010 earthquake and who had no alternative but to make their own shelters wherever they could.

Until now evictions and threats of evictions have primarily affected internally displaced people (IDPs) occupying private land. However, the Mayor of Delmas has stated that within the next three months he intends to “evacuate” everyone in public places in the Delmas municipality, to help Haiti’s efforts to attract tourism and investment in the country.

The Mayor of Delmas ordered the eviction of all the families in these camps without prior notification or consultation with those affected. Municipal workers and police officers accompanying the Mayor pulled down and tore the tents and tarpaulins of the families. By the time the authorities arrived, some residents had already left for their daily activities and when they returned they found their frail shelters destroyed. Their personal belongings were seized or destroyed during the operation.

No alternative accommodation or shelter has been offered by the Haitian authorities to those forcibly evicted. According to information available to Amnesty International, no legal proceedings have been initiated by Delmas’ municipal authorities to remove IDPs from public places. The lack of security and inadequate living conditions in makeshift camps cannot be solved by forced evictions.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in French or your own language:

- Urge authorities to halt any further evictions of people from IDP camps in Delmas and other municipalities in Haiti until such time as adequate alternative accommodation can be provided;
- Urge the authorities to ensure that no one is being evicted without due process, adequate notice, consultation and ensuring that all of those affected have access to adequate alternative accommodation;
- Remind them that UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons state that such persons have the right to an adequate standard of living, including basic shelter and housing, and protection against arbitrary displacement.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JULY 2011 TO:

President

Monsieur Michel Martelly

Palais National

Rue Magny

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Fax: + 202-745-7215 (via Haiti embassy in the USA)

Email: communications@presidentmartelly.ht

Salutation: **Monsieur le Président, Dear President Martelly**

General Director of the Haiti National Police

Monsieur Mario Andrésol

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haïti

Email: marioandresol@yahoo.fr

Salutation: **Monsieur le Directeur Général / Señor**

Director General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The makeshift camp at *Place Carrefour Aéroport* was one among the 245 sites registered in the Delmas commune hosting IDPs. Delmas commune hosts the largest IDP population (nearly 250,000 as of January 2011) and the largest number of camps. It is also the commune with the highest number of persons evicted. According to United Nations' Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM), 10 cases of evictions have been recorded in Delmas commune, affecting nearly 27,000 persons. There are currently 680,000 persons living in more than 1,000 camps in Haiti and 70% of these face threats or imminent evictions, in most cases without due legal process.

A devastating earthquake struck Haiti on 12 January 2010, with the epicentre localised near Port-au-Prince, leaving nearly 1.5 million persons homeless. Makeshift camps sprung overnight on every single patch of open space, private or public. Sixteen months after the earthquake, living conditions in most of the camps remain dire in spite of massive humanitarian relief efforts. Construction of temporary shelters to accommodate tens of thousands of families living in the camps is progressing slowly. Forced evictions exacerbate the plight of Haitian families with no access to alternative shelter as the rain and hurricane season is looming.

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