

URGENT ACTION

HAITIAN FAMILIES FACE FORCIBLE EVICTION

On 28 September, a landowner, accompanied by armed men, made violent threats against more than 300 people in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, who have been living in a makeshift camp on his property since their homes were destroyed in the January 2010 earthquake. Amnesty International is extremely concerned for their safety and that if evicted they will be forced to live on the streets.

Residents of a makeshift camp called Palais de l'Art in the municipality of Delmas, Port-au-Prince, have been threatened with violence in an attempt to forcibly evict them from the land where they have lived since they lost their homes in the January 2010 earthquake. At approximately 4pm on Wednesday 28 September the owner of the property where the camp is located - the car park of the Palais de l'Art events centre - entered the camp along with eight armed men. The men, who all had pistols visible underneath their t-shirts, accompanied the owner as he went to each shelter, threatening occupants that later that night there would be an "operation Baghdad" – a reference to brutal killings perpetrated by gang members between 2004-2006. The owner later returned at 6pm to lock the gate which provides the only access to the camp, meaning that residents were forced to climb a 5 foot-high wall in order to enter and leave the property.

The owner had failed to attend a hearing earlier on the morning of 28 September at a local court which was supposed to hear his claim to evict the families from his property. The hearing has been adjourned for a later date. During a visit to the camp on Saturday 17 September the owner had told an Amnesty International delegation that he would return in two weeks time to "kick out" the families. 112 families – approximately 330 people – have lived in the camp since being left homeless after the devastating January 2010 earthquake. They do not wish to remain on the land, which has no running water and poor sanitary conditions, but want to be provided with adequate alternative accommodation so they can finally start rebuilding their lives after the earthquake.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Express concern for the security of Camp Palais de l'Art residents following the receipt of violent threats and urge the authorities to carry out an immediate investigation and prosecute those found responsible ;
- Urge the authorities to ensure that residents of Camp Palais de l'Art are not evicted without due process, adequate notice, consultation and that all of those affected have access to adequate alternative accommodation;
- Urge them to comply with the precautionary measures issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights which call for a moratorium on all evictions from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and the transfer of anyone unlawfully evicted to places with minimum sanitary and security conditions;
- 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 11 NOVEMBER 2011 TO:

Minister of Justice a.i.

Jean-Max Bellerive

Ministre de la Justice a.i.

Ministère de la Justice

18 Rue Charles Summer, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Email: secretariat.mjsp@yahoo.com

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Director of the Haitian National Police

Mario Andresol

Directeur General

Police Nationale d'Haiti

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Email: marioandresol@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur / Dear Director

And copies to:

caribbean.urgentaction@amnesty.org

(These will be collected and distributed to relevant parties – this is because some local NGOs in Haiti do not have permanent or electronic addresses)

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are approximately 680,000 persons currently living in more than 1,000 makeshift camps in Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake. According to figures from the United Nations, since the earthquake 67,162 people have been affected by evictions, and the number of camps under threat of eviction have risen from 87 in July 2010 to 348 camps in July 2011, an increase of 400 per cent.

Many of the camps under threat of eviction are located in the municipality of Delmas in Port-au-Prince. In May 2011 more than 300 homeless families were forcibly evicted by from two makeshift camps in the municipality of Delmas by local municipal authorities who were accompanied by officers from the Haitian National Police. 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.

At the time, the Mayor of Delmas stated that within the next three months he intended to “evacuate” everyone in public places in the municipality of Delmas, in order 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.

Several hundred families living in Camp Mosayik and neighbouring Camp Mormon, both in Delmas, are also currently under threat of eviction without having been offered alternative accommodation.

On 18 November 2010 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued precautionary measures calling on the Haitian authorities to adopt a moratorium on all evictions from camps housing people internally displaced after the January 2010 earthquake. The precautionary measures also called for anyone who is unlawfully evicted to be transferred to places with minimum sanitary and security conditions. States are obligated to adopt and implement the precautionary measures issued by the Commission.

Name: n/a

Gender: n/a

This is the first update of UA 284/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/014/2011/en>

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