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## **Haiti: Forced evictions worsen the already dire lot of earthquake homeless**

Forced evictions in Haiti are worsening the already desperate situation of thousands of people still living in displacement camps more than three years after the devastating earthquake of January 2010, Amnesty International said as it launched the report [\*'Nowhere to go': Forced evictions in Haiti's camps for displaced people\*](#).

“Appeals from Amnesty International and other NGOs to halt the forced evictions have fallen on deaf ears - not only has the Haitian government not put an end to them, but it has allowed them to increase since the beginning of this year,” said Javier Zúñiga, Special Advisor at Amnesty International.

Almost 1,000 families have been forcibly evicted from their homes between January and March this year – an about-turn from 2012 when forced evictions were on the decline, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

These 977 new families evicted come on top of the at least 60,978 people who were forcibly evicted between July 2010 and the end of 2012. Many of these forced evictions have been carried out or condoned by the authorities.

“Forced evictions threaten nearly a quarter of the more than 320,000 people still living in camps more than three years on from the earthquake,” said Zúñiga.

“This is a story of ongoing human rights violations creating deep suffering. People who most suffered from the earthquake were those living in extreme poverty. They have been living in camps with appalling living conditions. And, as if this were not enough, they are threatened with forced evictions and, eventually, made homeless again. Each time it becomes increasingly difficult for them to find a new location and the means to rebuild their lives.”

It's the story of people like Cléane Etienne – police officers forcibly evicted her last January from Camp Fanm Koperatif, in the capital Port-au-Prince. She lost not only her shelter, but also all of her belongings –including the materials she needed to sustain a small business.

Suze Mondesir, another former resident of Camp Fanm Koperatif, recounted her family's ordeal: "Around 10am a group of police officers accompanied by men armed with machetes and knives arrived at the camp. They insulted us and began to demolish our tents. The men pushed us around and the police waved their guns at us to prevent us from reacting."

Such testimonies included in the report show how forced evictions are often accompanied by systematic intimidation, harassment and violence. In most cases, the makeshift shelters and belongings of those forcibly evicted are completely destroyed.

Forced evictions are, however, just one aspect of problems related to the right to adequate housing in Haiti.

Living conditions in displacement camps have been constantly degrading. The lack of access to services such as water, sanitation and waste disposal have put residents at risk of infectious diseases. The lack of security in the camps has made the lives of the residents a constant fear, particularly for the women and girls, many of whom have been victims of sexual violence.

Housing was a chronic problem in Haiti even before the earthquake when international organizations estimated a deficit of 700,000 houses – Haiti has a population of just in excess of 10 million people.

Acknowledging that the housing situation needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way, the Haitian government is currently drafting the country's first ever housing policy.

“We welcome that for the first time the government is proposing a national strategy for the development of the housing sector and we hope that the new version will rectify some elements of the previous draft, in order to ensure this policy will enable the fulfilment of the right to adequate housing for all in Haiti,” said Zúñiga.

“The massive ongoing earthquake recovery effort is an opportunity to address the housing problem in Haiti. However, in order to do that, the authorities need to put human rights at the heart of their reconstruction plans.”

### **Background information**

More than three years after the devastating earthquake life for those made homeless has been extremely difficult. They have struggled to make a living for themselves and their families with little access to safe drinking water, sanitation, health care, schools or other essential services.

The number of internally displaced people and the number of makeshift camps have been decreasing since July 2010, from a peak of some 1.5 million people living in 1,555 camps to 320,051 people living in 385 camps as of the end of March 2013, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Thousands of families have left the camps for other accommodation provided through different projects and programmes. However, forced evictions appear to have become an important factor leading to the reduction in camp numbers.

The report '*Nowhere to go: Forced evictions in Haiti's camps for displaced people*' is based on three fact-finding visits to Haiti by Amnesty International delegates in 2011 and 2012, which focussed on

The report is part of Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign, which focuses on human rights violations that drive and deepen poverty. Amnesty International is focusing on human rights violations against people living in informal settlements and slums, calling on all governments to end forced evictions.

International human rights standards state that evictions should only be carried out as a last resort and only after a complete list of procedural safeguards has been put in place. They include: genuine consultation with residents to identify feasible alternatives to eviction; adequate prior notice; and compensation and adequate alternative housing for those who cannot provide for themselves. None of these safeguards is being implemented in Haiti.

More press materials on the report:

[Facts and Figures Document.](#)

[Cases Document.](#)