

DECLARATION FROM
THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM
ON THE CRISIS OF HOUSING IN HAITI

DOWN WITH THE VIOLENCE
AGAINST INTERNALLY DISPLACED
PERSONS RESIDING IN CAMPS
/ IN SUPPORT OF PERMANENT
LODGING

MAY 21, 2011

We representatives from more than 50 [internally displaced persons] camps from Port-au-Prince, Delmas, Carrefour, Pétion-ville, Tabard, Croix-des-Bouquets, Petit-Goave, Grand Goave, Las Cahobas, and Jacmel, who have united together in Haiti from May 19-21, 2011 under the initiative of the Force for Reflection and Action on Housing (FRAKKA), together with other partners... We from camp committees, grassroots groups, and non-governmental organizations... We committed citizens, plus comrades from other countries who participated in the International Forum on the Crisis of Housing in Haiti... We denounce with all our might the acts of violence that are taking place in many camps to force residents to leave, without having anyplace else to go.

During the three days of the forum, we heard much testimony about threats and violence that people are suffering from landowners who are trying to force them out of camps. In certain places, they have destroyed tents with razors and set tents on fire, while in other places they

are using gangs who are pulling guns on people. In still other camps, they are actively creating division. They are destroying street vendors' goods. They prohibit people from meeting. They prevent organizations from doing their work. All these gestures are enacted on a people that are already traumatized after being victim to the earthquake which killed families and destroyed what little people had. All this is a crime and a violation of human rights, is unacceptable, and must cease.

We who sign this petition remind all that it is not by choice that people are living in tents on top of each other, on spaces full of garbage and sewage that endanger people's lives. It was the catastrophe of the earthquake of January 12, 2010, which killed more than 300,000 and which crushed so many houses and left so many homeless. While government authorities have never said what they will do for victims in tents, many have already taken positions in favor of landowners.

We remind all that, when a natural disaster occurs, internally displaced persons are protected by strong humanitarian principles. They may not be evicted under any conditions from the spaces they occupy. In cases where people are being threatened with eviction by those who claim they own the land, the state must protect them and prepare appropriate spaces to relocate them. The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mandates that the state guarantee its people lodging. The 1987 [Haitian] constitution, Article 22, says that everyone has a right to decent housing.

Faced with all this violence to expel displaced persons, we ask that:

- The authorities who have the power stop the violence that is everywhere accompanying evictions, as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requires [in its directive to the Government of Haiti last November];
- The authorities arrest and bring to justice all those who engage in violence against those living in camps;
- The authorities take all measures to help people find permanent housing so they can resettle out of camps.

We representatives of many organizations which participated in this international colloquium on the crisis of housing, we stand in solidarity with all those who are under threat. We say that they are not alone in their suffering. We will mobilize at national and international levels against forced expulsions, to push the government to assume its responsibility to guarantee the right of housing for all.

Signed by: (signatures follow from hundreds of representatives of at least 35 camps and at least 40 grassroots and non-governmental organizations)

Translated by Beverly Bell.



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Yon lòt Ayiti Posib!!!