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COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN HAITI'S DISPLACEMENT CAMPS

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ABSTRACT

Nearly two years after the massive Haiti earthquake, half a million people remain in displacement camps that have become breeding grounds for gender-based violence (GBV). Why does this travesty persist and what is being done to stop it? The first part of this paper will present the context for gender-based violence in Haiti's camps and discuss some of the actions taken by the international community and local groups to prevent and combat the problem. I will then analyze the 572 Call Center project which has emerged as a promising lifeline for women in the camps. In the final section of the paper, I will propose recommendations for prevention, specifically a method that targets men in the camps through sports and educational entertainment. Throughout the paper, I will argue that a multidimensional, holistic approach is the most effective way to combat the spread of GBV in Haiti's camps. Action must take place on three levels: to prevent the violence before it occurs, to provide urgent response and support to survivors, and to seek justice for the victims. Finally, I will provide a brief addendum to my research based on a January trip I took to the camps in Port-au-Prince.

INTRODUCTION

On January 12, 2010 a 7.0-magnitude earthquake devastated Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, killing 230,000 people, injuring 300,000 and leaving 2 million people—almost a quarter of the population—without a home. The earthquake left horrific catastrophes in its wake and set the context for the perpetration of sexual violence against women in the camps set up for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The violence has been called an epidemic, spreading through the camps and ravaging the already victimized women and girls who have survived the quake. Nearly two years after the disaster, half a million people remain in camps that have become breeding grounds for human rights violations. While an accurate count of victims is nearly impossible to attain because of lack of reporting, three times as many women have become pregnant in the camps as before the earthquake.¹

Why does this travesty persist and what is being done to stop it? The first part of this paper will present the context for gender-based violence (GBV) in Haiti's IDP camps and discuss some of the actions taken by the international community and local groups to prevent and combat the problem. The paper will then analyze the 572 Call Center project, which has emerged as a promising lifeline for women in the camps. The final section of the paper will propose recommendations for prevention, specifically a method that targets men in the camps through sports and "edutainment." Throughout the paper, the case will be made that a multidimensional, holistic approach is the most effective way to combat the spread of GBV in IDP camps. Action must take place on three levels: to prevent the violence before it occurs, to provide urgent response and support to survivors, and to seek justice for the victims.

Gender-based violence is a violation of universal human rights protected by international human rights conventions. The term gender-based violence, as it is defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, refers to "any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." An expression of GBV, sexual violence against women, as it occurs in Haiti's IDP camps, is a crime against the individual and an act of aggression against the entire community or nation.² According to a report published by the rights-based non-governmental organization (NGO), MADRE, rape is an extreme violation of universal human rights and "compromises the ability of

women to access the full panoply of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights” (2010:4). For example, a woman who is hurt and traumatized by rape may be incapable of exercising her right to attend school, work, or participate meaningfully in her community.³ GBV causes a “downward spiral leading to further deterioration of human rights.”⁴

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF GBV IN HAITI’S IDP CAMPS

Violence against women has an enduring history in Haiti. Human Rights Watch reports that high maternal mortality rates, crushing poverty, and domestic and sexual violence were commonplace prior to 2010. Past regimes in Haiti have used sexual violence as a tool of repression in a society where women have often been considered second-class citizens.⁵ Weak political and judicial institutions have prevented GBV victims from seeking justice. It must be recognized that the IDP camps did not give birth to an epidemic of sexual violence, but rather provided conditions for the violence to reach heightened dimensions. Complex emergencies often accentuate existing societal problems and, in Haiti, the earthquake renewed a cycle of women’s repression and victimization.

In a complex emergency like that which occurred in Haiti, lawlessness and chaos erupt immediately. The erosion of familial networks, the loss of access to social services and assistance, the absence of law enforcement, and lack of security are results of disaster and displacement. Women and girls are especially vulnerable as physical and social infrastructure collapses; their safe havens inside homes and with family are threatened or destroyed. As livelihoods crumble, feelings of helplessness, desperation, anger, and fear abound. Death and destruction, compounded by outbreaks of illness in the camps, devastate the entire population. The dehumanizing conditions of living in IDP camps add to the frustration and emotions often channeled into sexual violence against women and girls.

The abysmal conditions of IDP camps accentuate female vulnerabilities. For example, women and girls often sleep on the ground under nothing more than a tarp or blanket. Insecure shelters and publically shared facilities for bathing and sanitation place women and girls at extremely high risk. Even where latrines exist, “the average number of people sharing a toilet in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area is 273 people.”⁶ Women reported having to bathe in full public view of men. Little or no electric lighting is provided in the camps, which makes women particularly susceptible to attacks at night. There is a general lack of

security in the camps, especially after dark. Despite a recent increase in UN guards and community watch programs, fear haunts women. As a displaced woman told Amnesty International, “At night, we cannot sleep because of the violence. Bandits and rapists don’t sleep” (2011: 2).

Inadequate patrolling, untrained law enforcement, and the police’s denial of rape occurrences allow the violence to continue unabated. The Director General of the Haitian Police stated in an interview that there had been only twenty cases of rape reported to the police between January and March. A UN Police spokesperson discounted the stories of women’s rape and said that it was simply untrue. Meanwhile, a grassroots organization working with victims of GBV registered more than 250 cases of rape during the first 150 days after the earthquake.⁷ The breakdown of law and order allows perpetrators of violence to act with impunity.

The circumstances of rape follow similar patterns. Rape often occurs at night; the perpetrator is usually armed with a gun or knife; their face is covered; and multiple men participate in or watch the atrocity. Many of the rapists are escaped convicts, gang members, or even local or foreign (UN) security forces. Most women reported that the rape was not accompanied by other crimes such as robbery.⁸ Age is not a factor in the victims targeted—women and girls of all ages have reported rapes.

After a woman or girl has been raped, there are many factors that contribute to whether or not she will report the crime. Lack of access to resources and information is considered one of the biggest impediments to receiving help and support.⁹ Before the earthquake, 26% of women reported seeking out mothers or female friends for help, but after the disaster, these familial support systems may be gone. Women in Haiti’s IDP camps admitted not knowing what health services were available, where to seek help, who to trust, what options existed for achieving justice, or how to prevent further violence. There is such a strong, negative social stigma attached to rape in Haiti that many women deny being victims at all. Dire consequences can result from rape: disease, unwanted pregnancy, dangerous termination of pregnancy, and future disability and/or depression.¹⁰

ADDRESSING GBV IN HAITI'S IDP CAMPS¹¹

MINUSTAH

For the purposes of this paper, the discussion will focus on what the implementing NGOs and local organizations are doing on the ground, which the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) loosely supports. The earthquake devastated an already fragile state, and MINUSTAH has heavily assisted Haiti's government since 2004, when conflict was spreading throughout the country. Mandated by the UN, MINUSTAH aims to restore a secure and stable environment, strengthen Haiti's government and rule-of-law, and protect and promote human rights. The mission takes a rights-based approach to fighting GBV by building the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, law enforcement and judicial systems within the Haitian government. MINUSTAH works at the policy level to ensure protection for women. They have partnered with a number of NGOs and grassroots women's organizations to implement GBV awareness and prevention training.

KOFAVIV

The Commission of Women Victims for Victims (KOFVIV) is the most visible and active organization in the camps. A local grassroots group founded by rape victims, KOFVIV works on all three levels to combat GBV. They take a "women in development" approach by helping women access information, healthcare, and justice. KOFVIV has a long history of providing services to victims and have over 1,000 members actively living in the camps. To prevent sexual assault, KOFVIV has distributed cell phones, whistles, and flashlights to women. They have organized community watch groups, established safe spaces for women to congregate, and led capacity-building trainings to teach women how to respond to violence. KOFVIV also provides the social services that that Haitian government is unable to offer its citizens.¹² They provide immediate direct care and protection, linking women to emergency contraceptives, HIV prophylaxis, medicines, and treatment for injuries. Group members often accompany victims to the hospital and police station, providing the psychosocial safety net many victims lack. They connect women who wish to seek justice with the proper networks and hold support groups and counseling sessions for survivors. However, KOFVIV has acted independently of public officials and has been unable to sustain many of its projects in the camps because of gangs threatening violence against them.¹³ Without the help of the international NGO, MADRE and other groups, KOFVIV might not have sustained the

positive reputation for its proactive, quick, and effective action.¹⁴ KOFAVIV has collaborated with and pulled together resources from virtually all organizations active in women's issues in IDP camps, including the next groups I will discuss.

FAVILEK

Women Victims Stand Up (FAVILEK) is another local grassroots organization that focuses on the prevention and awareness of GBV in Haiti. Through Creole theater, FAVILEK advocates, educates, and seeks justice for women who could be, or have been, victims of sexual abuse. Combining a unique rights-based and "gender and development" approach, FAVILEK has been actively partnering with KOFAVIV outside of the IDP camps. The organization aims to raise the awareness of all members of Haitian society, targeting the poor, the middle-class, and policy-makers alike. Using the medium of theater provides a non-violent stage through which women challenge the societal gender norms that can perpetuate GBV in Haiti.¹⁵

RAPP

The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and the international legal group, *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), have created a corps of trained Haitian human rights lawyers and advocates to combat GBV through rule-of-law and by seeking justice for the survivors. Taking a strong rights-based stance on the issue and building the capacity of the justice system, the organizations have established the Rape Accountability and Prevention Program (RAPP) as a component of their fight for human rights and freedoms for Haitian women. By partnering with grassroots groups and NGOs, RAPP provides sexual assault victims low-cost legal services to obtain justice and compensation. The Project's mission "deters future rape by punishing the perpetrators and forcing a more effective response by law enforcement and the justice system." IJDH is currently representing over fifty women and girls who have been victims of rape. Of these cases, only six have resulted in arrest and detention. The sluggish progress of the cases is proof that justice is slow but possible for GBV victims in Haiti.¹⁶ RAPP has the potential to reach a large number of survivors by partnering with KOFAVIV. Despite the high-profile international and legal strength behind RAPP, women must first know their rights or they will not seek the avenue for achieving justice. Women and girls need basic education that teaches them what

rights are guaranteed to them under the law and how to know and respond when these rights are abused. RAPP may have the capacity to initiate proactive education that will widen the scope of the project and empower women and girls to understand and demand their human rights.

572: A New Initiative

Digital Democracy (DD), a US non-profit, was working to increase women's technology literacy in Haiti prior to the earthquake in 2010. As a partner in the Clinton Global Initiative, DD's mission is to use technology "to empower the most marginalized groups to engage in democratic action." After the catastrophe, DD partnered with KOFIV to train 150 women in technology literacy and to build a response and data collection system for victims of GBV. The initiative addresses the problem of women's inability to access basic information and services.¹⁷

The Call Center, officially launched in August 2011, manages the country's only phone-based emergency response system dedicated to rape and sexual assault in Haiti.¹⁸ There is no 911 or similar system for reporting emergencies, so this is a crucial piece of infrastructure in the country's long-term development. From any cell phone women can call or message #572 for free and access the hotline. Trained KOFIV employees will respond swiftly and professionally to the needs of the women, connecting her to all of the services offered by KOFIV. The women at the Call Center will advise and direct the survivor to receive care at a medical center, pay for the transportation to access help, and/or meet the women at her location. The "572" number has significance—if a woman can access services within seventy-two hours, there is a lower risk for pregnancy and HIV conception, and she can receive the official certificate required to seek justice. Family or friends can call on behalf of a victim for a threat made, and the Call Center will alert authorities if needed.

Before the Call Center, there was no accurate way to measure the rates of violence in the camps. According to Emily Jacobi, Executive Director of DD, the system can now "capture data on the real scope of the problem, to get urgent preventative care to the most vulnerable cases" by collecting information from the calls in camps. An important component of prevention, the database can produce reports, visualize data, and map the locations of assaults to provide government and international actors with information that will effect security and lighting alterations in the camps.¹⁹ A significant side effect of the initiative is the provision of capacity

building, employment, and empowerment to local women who have themselves been victims of GBV. The technology training will sustain women in the Call Center and provide others with new skills to seek other economic opportunities to support their families. Women are the decision-makers, economic recipients, and the primary stakeholders in the 572 Call Center.²⁰

The Call Center has been promoted throughout IDP camps by KOFAVIV's network of community outreach agents, police precincts, and the General Hospital. DD needs additional financial support to spread greater awareness across the city, which will allow the project to increase in scope. When questioned about the likelihood of women being able to access a cell phone to make the emergency call, Jacobi reported that this has not been a significant issue. Phone communication is a top priority for families in complex emergencies; the cell phone is a treasured item that few people will abandon in times of disaster. Jacobi explains that most people in the camps have a phone themselves or have a friend or family member with one. They will charge the phones with car batteries, at an entrepreneurial makeshift charging station, or at a local business. Because the call is free, the cell phone does not have to have purchased credit to connect to the Call Center. The 572 Call Center is now an integrated component of the comprehensive support that KOFAVIV provides for women and girls who are victims of rape in Haiti's IDP camps.

It is too soon to tell the direct impacts of the Call Center on rapes reported in the IDP camps. Awareness of the 572 hotline must spread extensively through vulnerable IDP camps to make a real impact on those who report and access services. DD should launch an informative campaign to share the 572 number throughout the radio, television and camp assistance networks. Stickers or signs could be placed in the areas most frequented by women such as bathing or water-fetching facilities. Reports of rapes should increase for an initial period, meaning that more women are reaching access to needed services and support. Psychosocial support has a major impact on survivors and their abilities to rehabilitate from trauma. In conjunction with proactive prevention strategies, improved camp conditions and an aggressive justice-seeking system that deters perpetrators, rates of reported rapes should decrease in the long-term. While the eventual resettlement and rebuilding of Port-au-Prince will lessen the vulnerabilities women face, GBV will perpetuate in Haiti without significant societal change of gender norms.

RECOMMENDATIONS²¹

Improved Security

Until capacity-building has strengthened the Haitian government's ability to ensure safety for its women in the camps through adequately trained security forces and enforced laws, NGOs and local groups can help create conditions that prevent assaults. More effective security brigades need to be developed, widely distributing whistles and wind-up or solar-powered flashlights.²² Volunteers could receive cash stipends from NGOs and take shifts during the night. Solar-powered streetlamps should be installed as a sustainable solution to dimly lit areas. Increased lighting should be concentrated in designated and enforced single-sex sanitation areas. Cheap wind-up radios should be widely distributed to disseminate vital camp information and contain "edutainment" messages to address violence against women.

Preventative Education

Proactive education should focus on prevention strategies and access to information. Girls should be taught about their right to live a life free from violence, how to recognize signs of sexual violence in both perpetrators and victims, why reporting cases is important, and where and how to get help. Since sixty percent of Haitian women are illiterate, education should be provided using pictures and the native Creole language. Females should be taught to use a buddy system when using the facilities and always carry a whistle in the camps. Moreover, people should discuss (and dismiss) the social stigma of rape, as rape can affect any woman regardless of race, age, or status. This rights-based and practical education can be taught within the formal educational setting if girls have access to schools or can be arranged by local groups or NGOs within the camps.

Targeting Males

An important component of proactive education to fight GBV is the inclusion of men. This can be done in the school setting, but engaging men in the conversation when it is not required of them is challenging. If men commit acts of GBV in complex emergencies partly because of emotional stress, lack of control over their lives, anger, and the need for an outlet of aggression, male prevention programs need to address these feelings. Alcohol, drug abuse and gambling are also strongly associated with violence against women.²³ Men and young boys need a platform upon which they can assert their community's construct of manliness that is not at the expense of women. Sports and recreation is a constructive,

enjoyable, uniting, and empowering outlet for the issues that catalyze GBV.²⁴

Locally led, loosely organized soccer or athletic leagues within the camps could provide an alternative for participation in many of the vices that spark violence against women. Such a program would cultivate leadership, empower young people with skills and knowledge, and build solidarity in a ravaged community. Community partnerships, safety measures, and minimal financial support would be needed for project success. Scrimmages held at dusk under proper lighting would keep many young men out of trouble and not interfere with productive daytime work. According to the International Platform on Sports and Development, sports have proven to be an effective “psychosocial intervention to address both emotional and social needs of people affected by disasters...enhancing their inner strength, responsiveness and flexibility in the face of high levels of stress and traumatic event.”²⁵ Young boys might turn to playing sports rather than joining gangs, participating in criminal activity, drinking alcohol, or harassing girls. NGOs could provide incentives of healthy snacks and clean water to draw interest. After establishing camaraderie between the young men, a component of “edutainment” would complement the mission. Positive role models speaking about issues in the camps, spreading information about how to access resources, and facilitating non-destructive entertainment would set a standard for these community-building programs. Ideally, the program would inform young men about the violations against women and foster their opposition to the practice. With time, communities could establish safe spaces to engage women and girls as fans or participants. By targeting young men, GBV may be prevented in camps and gender norms can begin to be challenged by the younger generations who will be crucial in the rebuilding of Haiti.

CONCLUSION

Like many engendered social issues, the struggle against GBV will not end quickly. Violence against women has persisted in Haiti for centuries and is not simply a side effect of the earthquake and consequent displacement. Ultimately, it is the Haitian government's responsibility to guarantee the safety of IDPs, along with support from MINUSTAH until the government can take care of its own people.²⁶ Protective policy must be combined with enforcement to ensure all women's safety. Simultaneous interventions of the widest scope possible must be taken

using a coordinated community response model that acts on three levels. Proactive prevention of rape through increased security and improved camp conditions; education that teaches girls their rights and how to protect themselves and others; and a targeted program that engages men through “edutainment” will help stop the present cycle of a gender-based violence. A strong response and support system should be in place to provide immediate assistance and life-saving resources to assault victims. Finally, communities must pursue justice to acknowledge the rights of women, discourage perpetrators, and to end the cycle of impunity that leads to GBV’s endurance in Haiti. Through this three-pronged approach, the Haitian state, international organizations, and local communities can jointly ensure every woman’s right to live a life free of violence.

¹ Information has been supplemented by Amanda Klasing from Human Rights Watch who spoke at the event, “Addressing Gender-Based Violence Across Humanitarian Development in Haiti,” at the Woodrow Wilson Center, November 15, 2011.

² Tsjeard Bouta, Georg Frerks, and Ian Bannon, *Gender, Conflict, and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005), 33.

³ The idea that GBV limits a woman’s ability to exercise freedom in her community is based on Amartya Sen’s capability approach to human development.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Amanda Klasing of Human Rights Watch.

⁶ Maggie Emery, Megan Shaw, Lisa Santosa, and Olivia Bird, “Recommendations to Reduce Sexual Violence in Haitian Internally Displaced Persons’ Camps,” *New Voices in Public Policy*, no. 5 (2011), 7.

⁷ As reported by KOFAVIV to Amnesty International in Amnesty International, “Aftershocks: Women Speak Out Against Sexual Violence in Haiti’s Camps” (London: Amnesty International, Ltd.: 2011).

⁸ Blaine Bookey, ed, “Our Bodies Are Still Trembling: Haitian Women Fight Against Rape,” (Boston: Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti: 2010), 11.

⁹ Information reported at the event, “Addressing Gender-Based Violence Across Humanitarian Development in Haiti,” at the Woodrow Wilson Center, November 15, 2011.

¹⁰ Gita Sen, Piroska Östlin, and Asha George, *Unequal, Unfair, Ineffective and Inefficient- Gender Inequity in Health: Why it exists and how we can change it.* (Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network: 2007), 48-50.

¹¹ The goal of this paper is not to present a comprehensive presentation on all of the activities taking place in Haiti to combat GBV, but rather discuss some illustrative examples of action.

¹² Emery, et al., “Recommendations to Reduce Sexual Violence,” 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ MADRE, a women-led human rights organization that battles sexual violence globally, partners with community-based organizations and has provided a substantial financial and physical support role to local NGOs in Haiti’s IDP camps.

¹⁵ FAVILEK, “About Favilek,” <http://favilek.interconnection.org/index.html>.

¹⁶ Lisa Davis, ed., "Our Bodies Are Still Trembling: Haitian Women Continue to Fight Against Rape" (New York: MADRE, 2011), 21.

¹⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United States Institute of Peace (USIP), The Abundance Foundation, the Channel Foundation, and USAID/OTI have all been a major supporters of the mission according to Emily Jacobi, Executive Director of the project.

¹⁸ Digital Democracy has partnered with Frontline SMS and Ayiti SMS Sekou who have been using SMS messages for mapping and communication with disaster relief coordination. All organizations have aligned with KOFAVIV to support the Call Center. KOFAVIV has even set up Twitter to be used in Creole to report violence to the Call Center. (Information provided by Emily Jacobi, speaker at GBV event, Woodrow Wilson Center, November 15, 2011.)

¹⁹ Biz Ghormley, "Announcing 572: the First Emergency Response System Dedicated to Sexual Violence in Haiti," *Digital Democracy*, <http://digital-democracy.org/2011/09/21/announcing-572-the-first-emergency-response-system-for-sexual-violence-in-haiti/>, 4.

²⁰ Digital Democracy website, presentation by Emily Jacobi at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and email correspondence with Jacobi.

²¹ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance published guidelines for GBV interventions in emergency settings in September 2005 are the source for many recommendations.

²² However, it is important that donor coordination ensures proper distribution. For example, an NGO purchased battery-operated flashlights and distributed them in order to increase lighting in the IDP camps. These flashlights are now useless because people cannot afford replacement batteries. Consulting local groups would have informed the NGO of this and recommended that wind-up or solar powered flashlights were more cost-effective and sustainable. Blaine Bookey, ed., "Our Bodies Are Still Trembling: Haitian Women Fight Against Rape" (Boston: Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti: 2010), 22.

²³ Andrew Morrison, Mary Ellsberg, and Sarah Bott, "Addressing Gender-Based Violence: A Critical Review of Interventions" *World Bank Research Observer* 22, no. 1 (2007): 28.

²⁴ Many ideas sparked from Jimmie Briggs, Executive Director of the Man Up Campaign, who spoke at "Male Leaders Speak: Critical Strategies for Combating GBV" at the Woodrow Wilson Center, November 22, 2011.

²⁵ This research has been supported by project case studies, such as those in the aftermath of the 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, where a sports league was set up to respond to needs of traumatized youth with great success (International Platform on Sports and Development website).

²⁶ Brookings Institute, *Addressing Internal Displacement: A Framework for National Responsibility*, April 2005, www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/04_national_responsibility_framework.aspx.

ADDENDUM

In January 2012, I traveled to Haiti with ten emergency physicians and development practitioners in order to attend an experiential conference, “Leveraging Disaster Relief for Long-Term Development.” The two weeks emerged as a think-tank in the back of a pickup truck traveling between devastated earthquake sites, NGO compounds, IDP camps, World Bank offices and UN peacekeeping complexes, shedding light on the realities of the post-disaster situation in Haiti exactly two years after the earthquake.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, not much has changed for women facing threats of gender-based violence in IDP camps and there is a lack of cohesion between groups responding to the issue. Sadly, as the post-disaster situation moves from an emergency state to a complex development challenge, funding is being pulled from many of the NGOs that have had the most positive effect on curbing GBV in the camps. A meeting with the International Rescue Committee GBV coordinator was illustrative of the realities for those working on displaced women’s protection and rights. I heard reports of a lack of coordination on GBV issues despite the UN’s coordinating body, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), arranging the cluster system to address needs divided by sector. The coordinator said, “No one appears to know what each other are doing and each situation of GBV is so unique that there is no tried and true prescription for response.” Her frustration was palpable—the problem is not receding, and as NGOs pull out services from the IDP camps due to loss of funding, more women and girls become vulnerable to attacks.

The government of Haiti is adamant about moving the 500,000 people out of the 800 IDP camps that remain active. Officials are worried about what the presence of camps does to the country’s image, morale, and the reflective responsiveness to donor funds. One Haitian told me: “Two weeks ago, there was a camp just over there. One day I looked and it was gone. The government had come in and threatened to burn the people’s tents if they didn’t evacuate immediately. I don’t know where all the people went.” In many cases, the forceful removal of people from camps results in secondary displacement to a location that does not provide services or a system for prevention and response to GBV.

In the camps that remain serviced by NGOs, such as Sean Penn’s well-publicized camp in the Petionville neighborhood of Port-au-Prince,

women complain of ongoing attacks. Tent shelters are tattered after two years and provide weak security despite women's creative attempts at nailing together wooden planks over their doors to keep intruders out. The lack of donor coordination is apparent even to the women who dwell in the camps. When I inquired about a hotline to respond to attacks, a middle-aged camp member responded, "I think there is some number that some Americans gave us a few months ago, but I have no idea what it is." The number was not 572 and the women in this camp had not heard of this initiative. The woman was clearly frustrated, a common feeling of aid fatigue that is felt by many recipients of unreliable services. MINUSTAH forces have a presence in the Petionville camp, yet they are ineffective in GBV response. The Jordanian UN peacekeepers do not speak Creole, French or English so it is virtually impossible for them to respond to an attack in this camp. The American and Canadian MINUSTAH representatives at the base camp in Port-au-Prince with whom I spoke seem extremely knowledgeable about the issue in the camps, but admit that their ability to respond to these issues is weak due to the various nationalities represented by the forces that have very different views on what constitutes GBV and how to act accordingly.

With donor funding for GBV prevention and response in camps waning because of international attention being drawn away from Haiti, the situation for women in camps remains bleak. With the government pushing people out of serviced camps, Haiti is in need of an institutionalized national GBV approach that spans the judicial, health and education sectors. Without such an approach, GBV will continue as a pandemic not just circulating through camps, but rather throughout neighborhoods, schools, and communities. Long-term, committed donor funding must concentrate on multi-sectoral capacity building within Haiti's government and should support local initiatives, like KOFAVIV, who will be permanently present in the country. As international NGOs working in Haiti move from emergency response to long-term development, they, too, must alter their approach to fighting gender-based violence. During the lifetime of MINUSTAH's mandate in Haiti, peacekeeping forces should be adequately trained to positively contribute to the chain of prevention and response in the existing IDP camps and in vulnerable neighborhoods throughout Port-au-Prince. Hotline response efforts need to be streamlined at the highest level so that national campaigns can aggressively promote a single organized initiative like "572" which promises sustainability if widely utilized. Finally, the

international community must continue to provide support and advocate for Haiti's protection of vulnerable women and girls by taking simultaneous action to prevent, respond to, and seek justice for victims of gender-based violence.

