

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 186th Period of Sessions

SUMMARY OF CIVIL SOCIETY PRESENTATION

HEARING ON WIDESPREAD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS IN HAITI

8 March 2023 | 8:45 AM

In accordance with instructions by the Commission in its letter of 6 February 2023, Petitioners present here the principal aspects of the presentation they intend to make before the Commission during its 186th Period of Sessions. Petitioners will provide a more extensive written submission and additional documentation.

PRINCIPAL POINTS PETITIONERS EXPECT TO MAKE IN THEIR PRESENTATION

Petitioners intend to present on the dynamics surrounding widespread sexual violence against women and girls in Haiti, which constitute patent violations of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights and of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women.

Petitioners will address in detail and offer testimonials about the following topics:

- The nature, incidence, and scope of sexual violence against women and girls in Haiti, which has continued to rise and is now being used as a tool of conflict;
- The unequal status of women and girls in Haitian society, which is at the root of the rampant, unchecked sexual violence directed against them in the present moment;
- The significant barriers to justice for women and girls who experience sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence, as well as a near-total lack of resources for survivors;
- The material impact of Haiti's current acute governance crisis on driving and impeding solutions and resources for sexual and other forms of gender-based violence inflicted on Haitian women and girls; and
- The specific experiences of marginalized communities in Haiti with respect to sexual violence, including displaced women, women living in rural areas, and detained women.

As part of their presentation, Petitioners will offer specific recommendations.

INTERVENORS

The following individuals will present testimonies to the Commission in person at the hearing:

- **Rosy Auguste Ducena** is a human rights lawyer with the *Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH)*, a Haitian non-profit organization for the promotion and defense of human rights. As Program Director, she coordinates human rights training activities and monitoring of key state institutions, the general human rights situation, humanitarian interventions during disasters, as well as electoral processes in Haiti.

- **Lucia D. Pascale Solages** is a Haitian grassroots feminist organizer. She is a founding member and general coordinator of the feminist organization **Nègès Mawon** which, since 2015, has worked to improve conditions for women and girls in Haiti including through public education and mobilization. In 2018, she also co-founded NOU PAP DÒMI, a collective of committed citizens for social justice and against corruption and impunity.
- **Yvon Janvier**, Haitian attorney and law professor, is a specialist in human rights with more than three decades of experience in the field. Professor Janvier teaches at the **École Supérieure Catholique de Droit de Jérémie (ESCDROJ)**, where he directs an in-house criminal legal clinic: the first of its kind in Haiti. He is also engaged in several organizations aimed at raising citizenship awareness and advancing sustainable development.
- **Carine Jocelyn** has over 15 years of experience working in Haiti and is the founder of the **Haitian Women's Collective (HWC)**, which invests in building capacity of local women's groups and advocates for U.S.-Haiti policies that promote self-determination of Haitian communities. She is also the board chair of the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network, and works as an executive and consultant in the nonprofit, public health space.

Petitioners further expect to submit to the Commission testimony from advocates representing the following organizations, who are unable to join in person due to the challenges of traveling to the hearings:

- The **Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI)** is Haiti's oldest public interest law firm, whose "victim-centered" practice combines legal services with support for non-violent advocacy and mobilization by marginalized groups. Through its Rape Accountability and Prevention Program, the BAI works to secure justice for survivors of gender-based violence and shift institutional and social barriers to effective prevention and accountability.
- Founded in 2004, the **Komisyon Fanm Viktim Pou Viktim (KOFAVIV)** (Commission of Women Victims for Victims) is a group of Haitian women survivors of political rape working to help new women victims from poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. KOFAVIV provides medical care and support for all women victims without discrimination.

In addition, representatives of the following Petitioning organizations will be present at the hearing and available to answer the Commission's questions:

- **Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS)**, based at the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, advances the human rights of refugees and engages in international collaboration to address the root causes of forced migration. For twenty-five years, the Center—and its affiliated student organization, the Haiti Justice Partnership—has partnered with ESCDROJ to advance the rule of law in Haiti through legal education.
- **The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH)** is a U.S.-based human rights non-profit organization. Since its founding in 2004, IJDH has been dedicated to tackling the root causes of injustice that impact human rights in Haiti. In partnership with the BAI, its Haiti-based sister organization, IJDH advocates, litigates, builds constituencies, and nurtures networks to create systemic pathways to justice for marginalized communities.

DOCUMENTATION

The United Nations and several civil society organizations, including Petitioners, have issued myriad reports in the last year documenting alarming sexual violence against women and girls and the Haitian government's lack of action to prevent and redress these grave human rights violations.

Petitioners draw the Commission's attention to the following:

U.N. Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [The Population of Cité Soleil in the Grip of Gang Violence](#) (2023)

U.N. Human Rights Council, [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Haiti](#) (2022)

BINUH and OHCHR, [Sexual violence in Port-au-Prince: A weapon used by gangs to instill fear](#) (2022)

IJDH, [Human Rights and Rule of Law in Haiti: Key Recent Developments June through November 2022](#) (2022)

IJDH, BAI, and KOFIV, [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review](#) (2022)

Nègès Mawon, IJDH and NYU Global Justice Clinic, [Input for the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women](#) (2022)

RNDDH, [Massacre in Cité Soleil: Chilling Stories of Women and Girls Victims of Gang Rape](#) (2022)

Yvon Janvier, [Gender-Based Violence in the Haitian Context](#) (2022)