

Federica Mogherini

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy, Vice President of the European Commission
European Commission
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1049 Brussels

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

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Dear High Representative Mogherini,

HAITI EARTHQUAKE FIVE YEARS ON: THE EU MUST ENSURE THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

January 12, 2015 marks the fifth anniversary of the 2010 earthquake which killed over 200,000 people and made more than two million people homeless in Haiti. Today, the housing situation remains an outstanding challenge for the Haitian government and the international community, according to Amnesty International's recent report [15 minutes to leave: Denial of the right to adequate housing in post-quake Haiti](#). We call upon the European Union (EU) and its member states to assist the Haitian authorities to ensure that post-earthquake reconstruction respects and fulfils the human rights of the Haitian population, including the right to adequate housing.

Since 2010, some initiatives have addressed the situation, but much more needs to be done. As of December 2014, more than 79,000 people are still living in makeshift displacement camps, where living conditions remain extremely precarious. The situation is compounding the risk of discrimination against people already at risk, such as women heads of households and people with disabilities. Lack of adequate living conditions in the camps and unsafe housing are exacerbating gender-based violence, and have a negative impact on the health of camp residents. Most people who have left the camps have not benefitted from durable housing solutions, especially those who did not own land or a house before the earthquake. In the absence of sustained and comprehensive efforts by the Haitian authorities and the international community, many people have moved back to unsafe houses. Others have started building or reconstructing their houses, often in informal settlements located in hazardous areas. This risks recreating and intensifying a housing crisis that existed before the earthquake, and which was amongst the factors that contributed to the extent of the devastation.

In addition, forced evictions of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from displacement camps, carried out or condoned by the authorities, have had traumatic effects on a population already gravely affected by the earthquake. While the number of forced evictions in the context of displacement camps decreased in 2014, forced displacement in other settings continues unabated – particularly in the framework of reconstruction and infrastructure development projects. The demolitions of hundreds of houses and forced evictions of residents in downtown Port-au-Prince in May 2014 in order to clear the area for the construction of public administration buildings are a clear example of what could become a growing and worrying trend.

The reconstruction of Haiti must be carried out with respect for the human rights of the Haitian population. Both the Haitian government and the international community must ensure that reconstruction projects do not have negative impacts on human rights, and do not expose local communities to the threat of forced evictions.

In line with EU and member states' commitments to place human rights at the centre of all external action, and in view of the extensive EU involvement in cooperation projects in post-earthquake Haiti, the EU and its member states should:

- Ensure that all cooperation projects conducted by the EU and the member states in Haiti do not negatively impact on the human rights of local populations, particularly in relation to the threat of forced eviction

- Call on the Haitian authorities to:
 - Declare a moratorium against all mass evictions until there are mechanisms to ensure that all evictions comply with international standards
 - Adopt and enforce legislation prohibiting forced evictions and providing safeguards against them
 - Thoroughly investigate all allegations of forced evictions and bring to justice those found responsible
 - Ensure that formalisation programmes targeting IDPs' camps and informal settlements do not result in forced evictions, provide security of tenure to all beneficiaries, and include options enabling those living in poverty and other vulnerable groups to access adequate housing
 - Fully implement the National Policy on Housing and Habitat in a manner that ensures access to adequate housing, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised, such as those living in poverty.

We welcome your engagement with Haiti to make the right to adequate housing a reality for all, and stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Ivana McGowan
Director of Programmes
Acting Director

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