



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNACIONAL DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

SUPPORT THE RIGHTS OF HAITIAN CHILDREN

In the wake of the dramatic aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and in the face of the indescribable pain of this population, the extension and expansion of international solidarity must be grounded in unshakeable ethical and moral principles that respect the human rights and sovereignty of the Haitian people. Special attention is called for in particular with respect to actions and programmes aimed at children and adolescents.

Defence for Children International's Argentina Section appreciates the many efforts being undertaken with a view toward humanitarian support, as this is essential in the current emergency to meet physical needs such as food and medical attention for the myriad cases of physical trauma. Likewise it is necessary to deploy adequate strategies for psychosocial support that respond to and fit in with the culture and customs of Haiti. The country's civil and religious organisations and groups of other types which are widely mobilised must be supported in their objectives to protect the rights and dignity of children, preserving their identities and family and community ties.

The massive temporary evacuation of children from their country is thus absolutely misguided; even more serious is the promotion of an optional mechanism for international adoptions which would be considered beyond the bounds of international legal standards, since the Republic of Haiti has not ratified the Hague Convention on international adoptions.

The confusion of aid and protection of children with the aforementioned mechanisms has happened before in similar situations, and has proved to be more traumatic than helpful. Moreover, it feeds dangerous and incontrollable child trafficking operations, considered by the United Nations as one of the modern manifestations of slavery. This same level of concern has been expressed by many international organisations such as UNICEF, BICE, Save the Children and Plan International, among others.

In the face of these circumstances we invite civil, public and academic organisations and others to stand behind the Redes Regionales de Solidaridad con los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes (Regional Networks of Solidarity with Children and Adolescents), supporting local institutions and those in neighbouring countries in contributing to the execution of efficient means to protect the basic rights of children within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Haiti is a State Party.

Regarding the current destruction and urgent needs, the response must be consolidated and based around the respect of Human Rights, the sole path through which the reconstruction of material losses and reparation of human suffering can call forth a horizon of renewed hope.

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