



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION**

The foundation FOKAL supports the Collective partnership against impunity in Haiti

Lawyers Without Borders Canada Supports Victims In the Trial Against Jean-Claude Duvalier

Port-au-Prince, February 20, 2013 - Lawyer Without Borders Canada (LWBC) is proud to announce that the Foundation of Knowledge and Liberty ((*Fondasyon konesans ak libète* – FOKAL), a Haitian institution member of Open Society Foundations network, has become a partner of the Collective against Impunity in Haiti (“the Collective”) and LWBC by agreeing to fund the project proposed by LWBC.

Since the return of Jean-Claude Duvalier to Haiti on the 16th of January, 2011, LWBC has worked with the Collective, a group which includes victims who have filed complaints against the former dictator for human rights violations committed under his regime and civil society organizations that accompany them. LWBC, in collaboration with OSJI, has contributed to the redaction of a memoir of argumentation (*amicus curiae*) for the Collective to appeal the decision of 27 Janvier 2012 by judge Carvès Jean who ruled that Jean-Claude Duvalier be trialed for economic crimes only and not for human rights violations.

“By embarking, against the current, in the uphill battle for justice against the ex President for life Jean-Claude Duvalier, the Collective demonstrates its willingness to contribute to the vision that impunity is not the irremediable destiny of Haiti. This support project reinforces our established collaboration, which has existed since the Collectives constitution, with LWBC and FOKAL. Their support will serve to expand the reach and impact of this symbolic case, which by its very nature has transformed the justice system, and therefore taken an important step towards the realisation of democratic rule of law in Haiti.” said Danièle Magloire, coordinator of the Collective.

Thanks to this project which FOKAL is now a partner of, the Collective are benefitting from greater technical input and assistance in representing the victims, the civil party in this landmark case against Jean-Claude Duvalier. This assistance is already being realized with a critical support in the context of the appeals court hearings. LWBC, which has been present at the previous hearings, will be equally present during the forthcoming hearing on Thursday February 21st.

“We are very proud of this new partnership between FOKAL, LWBC and the Collective, which is timely as the Collective is courageously leading the legal fight on appeal from the ruling of the examining magistrate” said Pascal Paradis, the Executive Director of LWBC. *“The Haitians have a thirst for justice. The roots of many of the ills afflicting the country today are found within the culture of impunity, in particular for the high rank officials responsible for the most serious*

crimes. The case of Jean-Claude Duvalier is emblematic: it is time to shed light on the years of dictatorship and for justice to be served in order to build a real rule of law" said Pascal Paradis.

"Since the creation of FOKAL in 1995, we have given ourselves a duty to remember our History. In this sense, we felt it was imperative to support the valuable work of the Collective, work that has been extremely useful and courageous in confronting the amnesia that threaten to derail democratic construction in Haiti or even its rebuilding" said Ms. Lorraine Mangonès, Executive Director FOKAL.

– 30 –

About Lawyers Without Borders Canada: LWBC (www.asfcanada.ca) is a non-governmental organization whose mission is to support the rights of individuals or groups most vulnerable by enhancing access to justice and legal representation. Present in several countries, the organization has been active in Haiti since 2006.

For more information:

In Haiti : Melinda Madueno, Head of mission
Phone: 3800.8158
Email: melinda.madueno@asfcanada.ca

In Canada : Julie Dahan
Phone : 418 907.2607 #107
Email : Julie.dahan@asfcanada.ca