

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact:

Catharine Skipp
Director of Media Relations and Public Affairs
University of Miami School of Law
cskipp@law.miami.edu
office: 305-284-9810
mobile: 305-773-5801

**University of Miami School of Law Human Rights Clinic Submits
Friend of Court Brief to Inter-American Court of Human Rights**
Case tackles illegal deportation of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent

CORAL GABLES, FL (October 28, 2013) – The University of Miami School of Law [Human Rights Clinic](#) has submitted an [amicus curiae brief](#) in the case of *Benito Tide Méndez et al., v. Dominican Republic* before the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#). The brief focuses on rights violations of the Dominican Republic in its process of carrying out mass deportations of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent without allowing them proper due process or taking into account humanitarian considerations.

The *amicus* brief was one of several filed in this case by advocacy organizations, including the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, touching on different issues at question in the *Benito Tide Méndez case*. In that case, approximately 30 dark-skinned individuals of Haitian descent, including long-term residents and citizens of the Dominican Republic, were arbitrarily detained and summarily deported to Haiti without any due process. These deportations are representative of a historical practice of mass expulsions from the Dominican Republic of people of Haitian descent; a practice that continues to this day.

This Clinic's brief argues that the Dominican government should be compelled to ensure that no one is deported without access to substantive and procedural due process rights, and to establish measures to ensure humanitarian protection of individuals facing deportations to Haiti specifically. The latter is particularly important in light of both the continuing crisis in Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake and the Dominican

Constitutional Tribunal's recent decision that has potentially put hundreds of thousands of additional individuals at risk of deportation to Haiti.

Last month, the Constitutional Tribunal published a decision that revoked the Dominican citizenship of generations of people born in the Dominican Republic of Haitian descent, going back to 1929. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people are no longer safeguarded by the protections of the Dominican Constitution and could possibly be subjected to deportation without notice or hearing.

The Inter-American Court's eventual ruling in the *Benito Tide Méndez* case could award financial compensation to the victims and order migration-related law and policy reforms in the Dominican Republic.

#

*The **University of Miami's** mission is to educate and nurture students, to create knowledge, and to provide service to our community and beyond. Committed to excellence and proud of the diversity of our University family, we strive to develop future leaders of our nation and the world. www.miami.edu*

*The **University of Miami School of Law's** mission is to foster the intellectual discipline, creativity, and critical skills that will prepare its graduates for the highest standards of professional competence in the practice of law in a global environment subject to continual -- and not always predictable -- transformation; to cultivate a broad range of legal and interdisciplinary scholarship that, working at the cutting edge of its field, enhances the development of law and legal doctrine, and deepens society's understanding of law and its role in society; and to fulfill the legal profession's historic duty to promote the interests of justice. www.law.miami.edu*

*The **University of Miami Human Rights Clinic** exposes students to the practice of law in the international and cross-cultural context of human rights litigation and advocacy at the local, national, and international levels. In the classroom, students critically engage with human rights law and contemporary social problems while honing their lawyering and advocacy skills. Outside the classroom, students gain hands-on experience working on cutting-edge human rights projects and cases before the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other human rights bodies. www.law.miami.edu/hrc*