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# NESRI NATIONAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE

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## **Tsunami Survivors Protest Treatment of Gulf Coast Survivors. -- New York City, July 18, 2007**

The Urban Poor Consortium in Indonesia demonstrated Tuesday, July 11th on behalf of Hurricane Katrina survivors in front of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. The group was protesting the human rights violations arising from U.S. and local government policies that impede Katrina survivors, in particular those from poor communities, from returning to their homes. Protestors emphasized the U.S. government obligations to the human right to adequate housing and healthcare, as well as the right to participation of all Katrina's survivors in the rebuilding process. To access the Consortium's statement to the embassy or see pictures of the protest go to: [http://www.nesri.org/media\\_updates/uplink\\_demo.html](http://www.nesri.org/media_updates/uplink_demo.html)

The Consortium's protest comes on the heels of a visit to New Orleans as part of the Tsunami/Katrina Transnational Exchange, a project of the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights in Thailand (also participating in this project is the National Policy Action Council on Homelessness). The Transnational Exchange facilitates solidarity through information sharing and exchange between Gulf Coast hurricane survivor activists and Asian tsunami survivor activists. The major objective of this project is to pass on best practices and strategies for post-disaster rebuilding that is grounded in community participation and human rights principles.

During the last leg of this exchange Tsunami survivors visited the current and former homes of Katrina survivors, and were at times visibly moved to tears on their shared grief, as well as shared outrage on the lack of accountability by government in the wake of the disasters. Tsunami survivors also visited community organizations, such as the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, where residents were working towards the restoration of marshlands to protect against future disasters, and Survivor's Village where public housing residents were exhibiting fierce resistance to the destruction of their homes. They visited the Gentilly Welfare Rights Organization that has remained a presence in New Orleans for forty years, and Mary Queen of Vietnam, a refugee community that successfully resisted government efforts to displace them and that is struggling against environmental abuses. Finally, the Consortium also visited the Mississippi Immigrant's Rights Alliance to learn about abuses suffered by immigrant workers in the region.

Members of the [Asian Coalition for Housing Rights](#) and [Tsunami Survivor Network](#), who have been applying innovating and effective strategies for rebuilding villages damaged by the tsunami and other disasters, visited New Orleans in June 2006 to assess the situation and meet with community groups. Subsequently, [two delegations of community groups](#) traveled to Indonesia and Thailand in September and October 2006 to visit local projects and learn from their model. Most recently, members of the [Asian Coalition for Housing Rights \(ACHR\)](#) and the Tsunami Survivor Network, visited the Gulf Coast during the week of July 1-6, 2007.

NESRI is a New York City based non profit that aims to promote a human rights vision for the United States that ensures dignity and access to the basic resources needed for human development and civic participation. For more information about this exchange or to contact participants of the exchange please call **Tiffany Gardner at (212) 253-1785**

*NESRI promotes a human rights vision for the U.S. that ensures dignity and access to basic resources needed for human development and civic participation. NESRI works in partnership with community organizations to provide human rights documentation and analysis, public education materials, and training. Through these partnerships, we enable communities to use human rights as a sustainable and practical approach for positive social change.*

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