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**Angela Davis to Speak Out against Human Rights Violations  
in New Orleans,  
Call for Amnesty for Prisoners of Katrina**

**Hundreds from Faith, Legal and Activist Communities  
to Gather for Human Rights Teach-in**

**Survivors of Criminalization and Imprisonment Tell Their Stories**

NEW ORLEANS — In recognition of International Human Rights Day, long-time activist, former prisoner and scholar **Angela Davis makes her first trip to New Orleans Post-Katrina to speak out against human rights violations here on Saturday December 9, 2006.** With New Orleanians arrested for the "crime" of trying to feed themselves after Katrina, prisoners left to drown in locked jail cells, and many held past release dates, Davis will come together with local social justice leaders, the faith community, prisoners' families and Katrina survivors to demand Amnesty for the Prisoners of Katrina.

Davis' visit is part of *Amnesty for Prisoners of Katrina: A Weekend of Reconciliation and Respect for Human Rights* – a two day series of events organized by Critical Resistance New Orleans, the local chapter of a national grassroots organization whose mission is to end society's use of imprisonment as an answer to social problems. Davis will be joined by a diverse group of local leaders, including **Pastor Tom Watson, Minister Willie Muhammad, lawyer Bill Quigley, social justice activist Malcolm Suber from the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, and local organizer Patricia Jones with the Lower Ninth Ward Empowerment Network Association.** **Rachel Francois, who was imprisoned during and after the flood, and Viola Washington, a family member of another prisoner of Katrina,** will speak about experiences of people being abused by guards, imprisoned for long periods without legal representation, and moved around the country for months without being able to contact family members.

**Saturday events will begin at Watson Memorial Teaching Services, 4400 Charles Ave., with a Human Rights Teach-in from 4-6pm, followed by a Roundtable Discussion with local leaders from 6-7:30 and a keynote by Angela Davis at 8pm. Immediately preceding Davis' address she will be joined on stage by local leaders to issue a unified call for Amnesty.** Sunday December 10 events are detailed in a press release following this one.

“Locking people up in this crisis was a cruel mismanagement of city resources,” said Robert Horton, New Orleans-based Organizer with Critical Resistance, “Katrina’s aftermath reflects the way we as a nation increasingly deal with social ills: police and imprison primarily poor Black communities for ‘crimes’ that are reflections of poverty and desperation

The continuing reality in New Orleans is one of vast criminalization and mistreatment of the prisoners of Katrina, current residents and the returning population. “We need to start making the connections in our discourse and our strategies between how current overt criminalization – which is reminiscent of the use of the term ‘looter,’— is tied to our inability to return home, and how denial of basic services and employment in certain parts of town gets linked with so-called ‘crime’,” said St. Claude resident Lorie Seruntine.

In this unfolding crisis, New Orleanians face invasive background checks when seeking housing and employment. Students attend schools with more security guards and police officers than teachers and books. Drivers are racially profiled and parole checkpoints are set up in Black neighborhoods and used to violate people on parole on bogus charges. Amnesty Weekend provides a rare and exciting opportunity to learn about the uses of international human rights standards in the wake of Katrina and demand that local civic leaders remedy these violations immediately.”