

MEDIA ADVISORY: Premiere Screening of The Most Violent Place on Earth and presentation of the Louise Arbour Award for International Justice

Vancouver, BC - There is a three country zone in Central America known as one of the most dangerous regions on earth. An area that has suffered from the 'perfect storm' of political and social violence, ineffective justice systems and the expansion of criminal gang activity that has led to a culture of violence where people are literally getting away with murder.

On April 10, media are invited to view *The Most Violent Place on Earth*, a powerful new documentary which explores a decade of work by the Justice Education Society (JES) to address criminal impunity in three of the most violent places on earth: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. The film examines the extent of the violence, gives first-hand accounts of its impact and takes a behind the scenes look at the work of a Vancouver-based organization to transform justice systems in Central America.

"This is a war against violence in a part of the world where the social fabric is torn. You're not going to build it back in a year - it's going to take time. But what we are doing is critical to that whole process. The Canadian work is making a difference," said Rick Craig, Executive Director of JES.

Since 2001, with funding from the government of Canada through DFAIT and CIDA, JES has partnered with the RCMP, BC prosecutors and BC judges to help these countries build more effective justice systems. To date, more than 3,500 local professionals have been trained and the resolution rates for homicides in Guatemala have increased dramatically.

Following the film screening, the Louise Arbour Award for International Justice will be presented to RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson to acknowledge the work of the many RCMP officers who have contributed to the progress being made in Central America. Retired RCMP Inspector Kevin MacLeod, who still participates in the work, said, "JES is an organization that Canada can be very proud of and the RCMP has been a very significant part of that reputation. The work has made a huge difference in the lives of average people in Central America and other parts of the world."

Media are invited to attend the screening but as space is limited interested media are asked to contact Evelyn Neaman at 604-537-0798 to reserve a spot.

What: Private screening of *The Most Violent Place on Earth* Introduction by the film maker Stephen Herman Presentation of the Louise Arbour Award for International Justice followed by a Q&A with JES Executive Director Rick Craig, film maker Stephen Herman and an RCMP Subject Matter Expert

Where: Vancity Theatre - 1181 Seymour Street, Vancouver, BC

When: 7:15 p.m., Wednesday, April 10, 2013

Background information:

About the Justice Education Society

The mission of the Justice Education Society international program is to support the development and strengthening of effective justice systems in fragile states. For more information, visit us online at www.JusticeEducation.ca/international.

Louise Arbour Award for International Justice

The Louise Arbour Award for International Justice, named after Louise Arbour, President and CEO of the Crisis Group, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is being presented to the RCMP to honour the work of the RCMP 3E² Division members in working with the Justice Education Society to build functioning justice systems in the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras during the years 2001-2009.

This work has helped these countries to combat an epidemic of violence and build justice systems based on the rule of law and it is showing impressive results. In January, the Public Ministry of Guatemala announced that its resolution rate for homicides has increased from 5% to 28% over the past three years. This is directly linked to Canadian assistance. Currently these three countries are ranked first, third and fifth amongst the top five most violent countries in the world.

About Violence in Central America

- Central America is known as one of the most violent regions in the world, with the highest rates of non-political crime worldwide.
- 79,000 people in the region died as a result of criminal violence between 2003 and 2008.
- Honduras had the highest homicide rate in the world in 2010, with 82 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Contrast that with 2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in Canada.
- There are more than 900 gangs ('maras') in Central America, with 70,000 members. They terrorize a total population of ~41 million.
- In Guatemala in 2009 the conviction rate for criminals was 5%. In 2012 the conviction rate increased to 28% which represents an increase of 460% in three years.
- For more information and statistics on this subject click [here](#).