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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 26th, 2010

**MODERN-DAY SLAVERY MUSEUM TO TOUR NEW YORK
FROM AUGUST 2ND TO AUGUST 4TH**

Museum visits historic landmarks, places of worship and community centers around the country, explores connections between past and present, and offers solutions to human rights crisis in the fields

New York, NY —The Florida Modern-Day Slavery Museum consists of a produce truck of the same model that farmworkers were locked inside of and chained in one of the latest slavery prosecutions (U.S. v. Navarrete, 2008), accompanied by displays on the history and evolution of slavery in Florida agriculture. The museum's central focus is on the phenomenon of modern-day slavery – its roots, the reasons it persists, and its solutions.

The exhibits were developed in consultation with workers who have escaped from forced labor operations as well as leading academic authorities on slavery and labor history in Florida. The museum is endorsed by several leading human rights and anti-slavery organizations, including Amnesty International and Anti-Slavery International, respectively the largest human rights organization and the oldest human rights organization in the world. It has recently been hosted at the U.S. State Department building and the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The museum was conceived by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the human rights award-winning farmworker organization that has aided in the prosecution by the Department of Justice of seven farm slavery operations and the liberation of well over 1,000 workers since 1997. A federal indictment for the most recent forced labor case in Florida agriculture was unsealed just this month.

The tour will also raise awareness about labor conditions in the tomato supply chains of Ahold's USA supermarket brands, including Giant, Stop & Shop, and Martins.

“Slavery in Florida agriculture today is not separate from the past – indeed, its roots extend deep within our state’s history. Farmworkers have always been, and remain today, the state’s poorest,

least powerful workers,” explains **Gerardo Reyes** of the CIW. “If we are to abolish slavery once and for all in Florida agriculture, we must pull it up by the roots by addressing farmworker poverty and powerlessness.”

Dr. Patrick Mason, a professor of economics and director of the African American studies program at Florida State University notes, “For too long, political representatives and ordinary citizens have ignored the recurring instances of enslavement in contemporary Florida. Indeed, for too long, there has been insufficient light shining in on the low pay and indecent working conditions of agricultural workers in this state. The mobile Florida Modern Slavery Museum is impressive and imaginative approach to shedding new light on these old issues. There is much we can learn from this endeavor and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the enlightening organization responsible for this educational tour.”

Dr. Kevin Bales, the Pulitzer-nominated author and president of Free the Slaves, an internationally-respected anti-slavery advocacy organization, adds, “There is real slavery in the fields of Florida. This is not about lousy jobs, but violent control, vicious exploitation, and the potential for serious harm and even death. Even more heartbreaking is the fact that there has never been a day in the history of Florida agriculture without some amount of slavery tainting the food grown there. That food leaves the hands of slaves and ends up in the meals we eat with our families.”

He continues, “It is an ugly problem and we cannot solve problems we do not understand. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers is one of the most effective anti-slavery groups on earth. Their new traveling museum helps all of us learn what we need to know in order to bring this crime to an end. This is a living museum that restores the right to life.”

NEW YORK CITY STOPS INFORMATION

Date: Monday, August 2nd

Location: Church Cathedral of St. John the Divine at 1047 Amsterdam Ave.

Time: 10am - 9pm.

Date: Tuesday, August 3rd

Location: Judson Memorial Church at 55 Washington Square South

Time: 10am - 9pm.

Date: Wednesday, August 4th

Location: Church Middle Collegiate Church at 50 E. 7th Street

Time: 10am - 9pm.



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