

American Missionary Beaten, Tasered in Haiti

New reports of the prison conditions and growing frail physical health clearly present the feared evidence of Daniel Pye's humanitarian rights being violated—not to mention being imprisoned without cause for five months.

Pye was arrested without charges or cause October 13, 2010. Pye was released on December 24, 2010, but before he and his pregnant wife could get to their vehicle the police accosted him and returned him to prison. He has now spent five months in prison. His wife is due to deliver their second child, a son, at the end of March.

Dr. Timothy Heck, a licensed marriage and family therapist from Indianapolis, Ind., was granted access to visit Pye in the overcrowded squalor of the Jacmel prison housing 400 men. Heck was allowed to bring in supplies and spend four hours debriefing, interviewing, counseling, and letting Pye know the extent of the growing support back home. The U.S. Embassy set up the visit for Pye with Heck.

Heck, having been to Haiti on numerous relief efforts over the years, was overwhelmed with the conditions he found. Heck says, "Danny is in a frail condition and his life is at risk."

Heck reports that Pye has experienced inhumane conditions and treatments:

- As the only white man—and only American—in the prison, some of the prisoners like to play a game on him that involves slapping him hard enough to leave a mark on his fair skin.
- The cell is 10' x 12', with 24 prisoners and enough bunks for only eight men.

- As a result of getting caught up in the middle of fights that break out in the courtyard during two 30-minute periods daily, Pye now stays in his cell to avoid the violence and punishments.
- He has been beaten.
- He has been tasered by the guards.
- Has witnessed two people being beaten to death by the guards' nightsticks.
- Has been sexually assaulted, forced to fight a man off in self defense.
- Guards wave their guns around and sometimes shoot into the air around the prisoners.
- Prisoners have not had sufficient food. Pye has food brought in to him by his family twice a day, but he only eats one meal, and then shares the rest with his fellow prisoners.

Pye's wife received a letter via e-mail, March 2 from Brandon J. Doyle, vice consul from the American Embassy in Port-au-Prince stating, "A consular officer will, however, take all steps necessary to ensure a U.S. citizen's right to legal counsel and due process."

The Pyes are from Bradenton, Fla. They have worked in Haiti for seven years providing a home for more than 20 orphaned and underserved, abandoned children. Pye sight guided cargo plane arrivals at the Jacmel airport when there was no other airstrip accessible and Haitian airport employees were frantically searching for their families, leaving the airport unattended—a critical resource for the devastated region when the PAP International Airport was closed after the 2010 earthquake.