



Health Action International (HAI) is an independent, global network, working to increase access to essential medicines and improve their rational use through research excellence and evidence-based advocacy.

## HAI Global Statement

### **Civil society freedoms endangered by anonymous threats: Stifling debate about public health in the H1N1 pandemic**

11 May 2010 - Health Action International (HAI) Global firmly supports freedom of expression and the freedom of civil society to carry out their work uninhibited by threats or intimidation. We are deeply troubled by the anonymous threats made against the Coordinator of our network partner, AIS (HAI) Bolivia following public statements about the H1N1 influenza vaccine debate.

H1N1 has generated considerable controversy and civil society comments represent a legitimate contribution to the international debate. We deplore any attempt to stifle the voice or participation of civil society organisations on issues that affect health and well-being. Public health is of public interest and whilst we uphold the principles of transparency and accountability in conducting our work, it is clear from the anonymous nature of the threats that those who disagree with our opinions do not.

HAI Global joins the HAI regional office in Latin America and the Caribbean in condemning the threats against AIS Bolivia and reaffirms its commitment to upholding Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that protects the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

#### **Health Action International (Global)**

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