



AIDWYC throws support to Ontario legal aid boycott

Toronto, Canada – November 10, 2009 – The Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted (AIDWYC) today announced its support of the legal aid boycott currently under way by criminal defence lawyers in Ontario. Since June 2009 a large number of criminal lawyers in Ontario have stopped accepting legal aid certificates for cases involving "guns and gangs" as well as homicide. The purpose of the action is to highlight the large difference between the government's funding of the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases and its funding of the defence.

"One of AIDWYC's principal objectives is the elimination of conditions that can lead to miscarriages of justice," said Ralph Steinberg, AIDWYC Board Co-President. "AIDWYC supports this boycott because it sees the serious and chronic underfunding of the defence of criminal cases as a contributing factor in wrongful convictions. The imbalance in resources between the prosecution and defence in criminal cases continues to raise the spectre of further mistakes being made in the criminal justice system, and to deny access to justice for those without resources."

AIDWYC is a non-profit legal organization advocating for wrongly convicted Canadians. Its clients are mostly poor and forgotten, and have exhausted all of their legal avenues for relief. In addition to championing the cause of factually innocent persons who have been wrongly convicted, the organization also works tirelessly to prevent wrongful convictions through legal education and reform.

-30-

For more information, contact:
Debbie Oakley, Executive Director
416-894-3276