



Contact: Riptide Communications, 212.260.5000
Weekend contact: Shonna Carter, 917.453.8286

**FRUSTRATED WITH LACK OF FEDERAL RESPONSE SIX MONTHS AFTER
KATRINA, HUNDREDS OF RELIGIOUS FIGURES TO HOLD NATIONAL DAY OF
PRAYER**

New Coalition to Push for Progress and Accountability

Events Scheduled to Take Place at Prominent Churches, Mosques and Synagogues

March 3, 2006, New York, NY— On March 3rd-5th, national faith-based groups, Gulf Coast survivors and national policy and political organizations will begin six weeks of prayer to draw attention to the continued lack of Federal aid to Hurricane Katrina victims. **National Alliance to Restore Opportunity to the Gulf Coast & Displaced Persons**, the group that spearheaded the project has enlisted hundreds of religious congregations across the country to dedicate time during their services this weekend to conduct prayer vigils and visits to congressional representatives, to mark the six-month anniversary of the most devastating natural disaster in American history. The call comes in response to the inadequate progress of federal agencies to restore communities in the Gulf Region. The **National Alliance to Restore Opportunity to the Gulf Coast & Displaced Persons** is demanding Washington leadership to:

- Rebuild the region,
- Improve the lives and destinies of Gulf Coast residents
- Provide opportunities and support for displaced Gulf residents and communities that received them
- Bring federal resources to the region without cutting other human needs programs.

"Too many victims of this unprecedented disaster are still waiting for relief. The federal government must provide immediate and long-term help that will revitalize these devastated communities for everyone. The survivors now in New Orleans must be helped as well as survivors dispersed throughout the country," said Professor John Powell of the Kirwan Institute and an advisor to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

Many of the participating religious institutions continue to bear the brunt of relief services. *"Our congregations in the Gulf Coast were unbelievably devastated by hurricanes. The continued lack of response from the federal government has devastated them once again. We must see action from Washington now to abate the suffering of our people,"* said Fr. John Baumann, Executive Director of the PICO National Network.

The event will bring together individuals from several religious backgrounds. *"The 1,600 Muslim, Jewish and Christian congregations of Gamaliel will be urged to act. We anticipate*

that at least 500 congregations will hold some type of event, using a common prayer and litany as well as visiting their Congressional representatives." said Rev. Kevin Turman of Detroit, Chair of Gamaliel President's Table.

The **National Alliance to Restore Opportunity to the Gulf Coast & Displaced Persons**, is a newly established coalition made up of prominent organizations including the Gamaliel Foundation, ACORN, the Kirwan Institute, TIKKUN Community, Institute for Research on Poverty, and the Center for Social Inclusion.

-30-

Primary Supporters:

Gamaliel Foundation (a network of 1,600 congregations in 18 states)

ACORN (the nation's largest grassroots citizen group and organizer of Gulf Coast survivors),

People Improving Communities Through Organizing (PICO, network of 1000 congregations in 17 states)

Sojourners

Call to Renewal

Smart Growth America

Kirwan Institute

Policylink

TIKKUN Community

Clergy Strategic Alliances

Equal Justice Society

Institute for Research on Poverty

Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University

Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community at University of California, Santa Cruz

Center for Social Inclusion

Earth House