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HEADLINE: Lottery winnings to be awarded to victims' families;
A judge has ruled that money from a Florida Lotto jackpot can be released to plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed against a former Haitian colonel accused of human rights violations.

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BODY:

A North Florida judge this week ruled that about \$808,000 left over from a \$3.2 million Florida Lotto jackpot won by a deported former Haitian military officer can be paid to relatives of victims of Haiti's 1994 Raboteau Massacre.

The decision, which moves the relatives a step closer to collecting compensation for their pain and suffering, came in a lawsuit filed by a California-based human rights organization, the former officer's Miami attorney said Friday.

Kurt Klaus, attorney for former Haitian army Col. Carl Dorelien, told The Miami Herald that Leon County Circuit Court Judge Janet Farris ruled Wednesday that a Haitian judgment awarding Raboteau victims one billion Haitian gourdes, or about \$28 million, was valid in Florida and could be paid from Dorelien's jackpot proceedings. Dorelien has been sued separately in federal court in Miami where the human rights group is seeking damages for relatives of Raboteau victims.

Klaus said he will appeal Farris' decision and ask her to keep the money in the account until all legal actions are exhausted. Klaus said Farris issued her ruling orally and is now preparing a formal written order.

The ruling was a victory for the San Francisco-based Center for Justice & Accountability, which sued Dorelien for the money. But CJA officials were circumspect about the matter because Farris' order is not final until it's in writing.

"We are not in a position to comment because we do not yet have a final written order from the judge," said CJA litigation director Matt Eisenbrandt.

Dorelien won the jackpot in 1997, but did not take a lump sum payment because that option was not available at the time.

He was deported in 2003 after an immigration judge found him to be a human rights violator.

He has denied any responsibility in the two-day rampage at Raboteau, a poor seaside neighborhood of Gonaves in Haiti, where at least 26 unarmed men, women and children were killed.

Human rights advocates blamed the massacre on several Haitian officials at the time, including Dorelien -- not because he was involved but because the soldiers linked to the killings were nominally under his command.

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