



**Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti**  
***Bureau des Avocats Internationaux***

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**Press Release: Security Council, meeting in Haiti, Should Accept UN's  
Responsibility for Cholera Epidemic**

*United Nations Must Weigh Costs of Past Inaction, Take Lead in Controlling Epidemic*

Monday, February 13, 2012, Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Boston, USA — Human Rights Groups in Haiti and the United States urge the United Nations Security Council delegation traveling to Haiti this week to evaluate the cost of the UN's failure to take responsibility for the epidemic of cholera introduced by troops from the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in terms of Haitian lives lost and damage to the UN's reputation. The *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI) and the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) represent 5,000 victims of the cholera epidemic, which has killed over 7,000 Haitians and sickened over 500,000 since October 2010. The epidemic is now the world's worst cholera epidemic.

The UN's own report cites to "overwhelming evidence" that UN troops introduced cholera to Haiti, but contends that the UN is not responsible for the consequent epidemic because a "confluence of factors," including poor health and sanitation systems in Haiti, helped the UN's cholera to spread rapidly through the Haitian population.

"Security Council members should talk to cholera victims - young children who lost their parents, families who spent all they had on medical treatment and burials, communities decimated by the disease" said Mario Joseph, BAI Managing Attorney. "I am confident that if they see the cost of the UN cholera on the Haitian people, they will do what they need to do to provide the clean water infrastructure necessary to control the epidemic. If they do not, the killing will go on and on."

“The ‘confluence of factors’ defense would be laughed out of court, except that the UN makes sure that it is never brought to any court for the wrongful acts of its missions,” said Brian Concannon, Jr., IJDH’s Director. “The UN’s holding itself above the law deeply subverts its mission of promoting the rule of law, in Haiti and throughout the world.” Concannon added that “the UN cholera epidemic is a textbook example of the dangers of impunity. Only an institution with no fear of consequences could have acted so recklessly with such dangerous bacteria.”

A video plea to the UN on behalf of cholera victims is posted at [www.fb.com/fighttheoutbreak](http://www.fb.com/fighttheoutbreak).

For more information, including case documents and background materials, see [www.IJDH.org](http://www.IJDH.org).

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