

Cholera Chronology

October 2010	UN discharges untreated sewage from a peacekeeping base into Haiti's main river system, triggering a massive cholera epidemic in a country with no documented history of cholera. The soldiers on the base have recently arrived from Nepal, where cholera is endemic and where a large cholera outbreak occurred in August 2010. They were not tested or treated for cholera before deployment despite Haiti's well-known vulnerability to water-borne diseases, and the base's sewage system was recklessly designed and maintained.
May 2011	UN-appointed panel of independent experts releases report summarizing evidence establishing UN responsibility for cholera.
August 2011	BAI begins reaching out to Haitian cholera victims to prepare a complaint to the UN, as the UN continues to deny responsibility and take minimal action. Concurrently, scientific studies confirm that the strain of cholera in Haiti matches Nepali strain.
November 2011	BAI and IJDH file claim with the UN on behalf of 5,000 Haitians killed or sickened by cholera. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the UN and the Government of Haiti, like all peacekeeping SOFAs, states that the UN is immune from national courts. Besides immunity, UN promises to establish internal mechanisms to adjudicate any claims of UN wrongdoing. These mechanisms have not been established in Haiti or in 60 years of international peacekeeping.
2012	<p>IJDH educates the US public about the case and advocates with US Congress and with UN Member States in New York. Specific actions and reactions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings with 12 key UN Member States, including Security Council members and troop-contributing countries to the Haiti peacekeeping mission. • US Congressional letter signed by 104 members sent to US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice demanding a just UN response to Haiti cholera. • 48 human rights organizations submit a petition demanding that the UN Secretary-General respond promptly to the Haiti cholera claims. • 30,000 signatures received on a petition hosted on the site Avaaz.org demanding a just UN response. • 400,000 online views of the award-winning short documentary "Baseball in the Time of Cholera" featuring BAI's work for cholera justice. • Sustained media attention to the case, including coverage by major media including BBC, CNN, NPR, The Economist and The New York Times. <p>In Haiti, BAI clients receive grassroots advocacy training and remain involved in the case by advocating for their rights in peaceful demonstrations, press conferences and video testimonies.</p>
December 2012	UN announces a \$2.2 billion Cholera-Free Hispaniola Initiative, a complete water and sewer infrastructure project for Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

	The initiative responds to a key demand in BAI and IJDH's case. UN commits \$23.5 million (1%) and announces availability of another \$215M of existing, unfulfilled pledges for Haiti that can be redirected to this project. In February 2013, the Haitian Government announces further details about the 10-year plan.
February 2013	After 15 months, the UN responds that the 5,000 victims' claims are "not receivable" because they implicate review of UN policies. This generates an enormous public outcry, including in mainstream media such as The BBC, The Economist, The New York Times, The Miami Herald, and The Boston Globe.
May 2013	BAI and IJDH give the UN 60 days to enter into discussion on the Haiti cholera claims and begin preparing a court case if the UN does not engage. Nineteen members of Congress, led by Representative Maxine Waters, write to the UN questioning the dismissal of the claims.
July 2013	After 59 days, the UN sends a second response to IJDH refusing to meet or mediate and a detailed letter to Representative Maxine Waters. IJDH continues to prepare a legal case to be filed in New York. Haiti's cholera epidemic continues, with cholera infections spiking again during the 2013 rainy season, as they did in 2011 and 2012. In the 1,000 days since the epidemic began, 667,000 Haitians—one in fifteen—have been sickened and 8,200 have died.
October 2013	BAI, IJDH, and KKWT filed a complaint against the UN in New York Southern District Federal Court. If the UN accepts the Complaint, BAI, IJDH, and KKWT will argue the case in court. If not, they will continue to fight for justice to be served.

Acronym key:

BAI = *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux*, Haiti's oldest and most prominent public interest law firm

IJDH = Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, BAI's sister organization in the US

KKWT = Kurzban, Kurzban, Weinger, Tetzelli & Pratt, Florida-based civil rights law firm