



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

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Human Rights Groups Applaud U.S. Call for UN Accountability for Haiti Cholera

Monday, March 5, 2012, Boston, Port-au-Prince — In a statement to the United Nations (UN) Security Council last week, U.S. Permanent Representative Susan Rice stressed the importance of UN accountability for its role in bringing cholera to Haiti, calling on the UN to “redouble its efforts to prevent any further incidents of this kind and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.”

The UN has not accepted responsibility for the outbreak despite extensive evidence, including by the UN’s own panel of experts, that cholera was brought to Haiti by troops from the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and introduced into Haiti’s largest river system through negligent waste disposal practices. The epidemic has killed over 7,000 Haitians and sickened over 500,000 since October 2010. It is expected to worsen as the rainy season begins.

“The UN ignored warnings about the lethal impact that cholera would have in Haiti, and allowed human waste from its base to poison Haiti’s central river. The UN must now accept responsibility for the deaths it has caused,” said Mario Joseph, Managing Attorney of the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI). The BAI represents over 5,000 victims of cholera who filed claims with the UN, seeking nationwide investments in water and sanitation infrastructure, compensation for the individual victims, and a public apology.

“We welcome the statement by Ambassador Rice, and consider this an important step in the right direction,” said Brian Concannon Jr., Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, co-counsel on the claims. “It is time for the UN to embrace accountability for its actions, and stop the cholera’s killing.”

The statement by Ambassador Rice comes after a Security Council visit to Haiti February 13 through 16 to evaluate MINUSTAH’s operations. Hundreds of Haitians joined in peaceful demonstrations during the Security Council delegation’s visit to protest MINUSTAH’s lack of responsibility for the cholera outbreak and recent allegations of sexual abuse by UN soldiers.

The lack of accountability has led to widespread discontent with MINUSTAH. A majority of Haitians surveyed in a recent study reported that they had overall negative views of MINUSTAH, and nearly three quarters of the respondents (74.5%) believed that MINUSTAH owes some form of restitution to cholera victims.