



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

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## Security Council Members, Clinton Break with UN's Policy of Denial on Cholera

Thursday, March 14, 2012, Boston, Port-au-Prince — Human rights groups in Haiti and the U.S. are praising President Bill Clinton and UN Security Council Members for their leadership in acknowledging the UN's responsibility for the epidemic of cholera introduced to Haiti by UN troops in 2010.

In a March 8, 2012 Security Council meeting dedicated to the troubled nation, France acknowledged the damage cholera has done to Haitians and the UN's reputation there, declaring, "*We can regret this, but we cannot ignore it.*" Pakistan further voiced that cholera has severely tested Haiti, and called for a UN apology, adding that the UN must do "*whatever is necessary to make this situation right.*"

These statements follow last week's public acknowledgement by Bill Clinton, UN Special Envoy to Haiti, that peacekeepers from South Asia introduced cholera into Haiti's rivers, and that this was the "proximate cause" of the epidemic. President Clinton is the first high-level UN official to publicly recognize that the UN caused the cholera epidemic since the outbreak began in October 2010. The week before, US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice called for accountability for the cholera epidemic after returning from a visit to Haiti.

"These statements are showing the leadership that cholera victims have been looking for from the UN for seventeen months," said Mario Joseph, Managing Attorney of the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), which filed petitions on behalf of 5,000 cholera victims against the United Nations in November 2011. "The UN denials in the face of a mountain of evidence pointing to its responsibility have further hurt the UN's reputation in Haiti while allowing cholera to continue raging."

Brian Concannon, the Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) which also represents the cholera victims, added "the UN taking responsibility is an important first step towards the UN providing what everyone agrees is necessary to control the epidemic - comprehensive clean water and sanitation infrastructure in Haiti."

By official counts, 525,000 Haitians have contracted cholera, and 7,025 have died since UN peacekeepers introduced the bacteria into Haitian waters in October 2010. Haiti's cholera epidemic is the worst in the world.