



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

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Contact:

Brian Concannon, Jr., Esq., Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, brian@ijdh.org, +1-617-652-0876 (English, French, Creole)

Mario Joseph, Av., *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux*, (in Haiti), mario@ijdh.org, +509-3701-9879 (Creole, French, English)

Human Rights Groups Commend UN for Acknowledging Limitations of “Band-Aid” Approach to Haiti Cholera

Thursday, May 10, 2012, Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Boston, USA—Rights groups in Haiti and the United States commend last week’s acknowledgment by United Nations official Nigel Fisher that the current efforts to alleviate cholera in Haiti are “patchwork, band-aid work on a fundamental problem.” Fisher, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Haiti, acknowledged in a [May 3rd interview](#) with the UN News Centre that “What we are doing in the short-term ... is necessary, but we all agree that the long-term solution is investment in improved drinking water sources and in waste management.”

“Mr. Fisher’s statement is a strong step in the right direction towards a sustainable response to the UN cholera epidemic,” said Brian Concannon Jr., Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and an attorney on a case filed by 5,000 cholera victims against the UN last November. He added, “Now the UN needs to take responsibility for its harmful actions and actually start installing the comprehensive water and sanitation infrastructure that is the only long-term solution to the cholera epidemic.”

Numerous studies, including a report by the UN’s Independent Panel of Experts, establish that UN peacekeepers introduced cholera into Haiti in October 2010. The epidemic is now the world’s worst. It has killed over 7,200 people and sickened over 530,000. Mr. Fisher warned that the epidemic could infect as many as 200,000 people in 2012 alone. UN agencies estimate the cost of controlling the epidemic by installing comprehensive clean water and sanitation in Haiti at \$746 million - \$1.1 billion.

“Of course the UN can afford to pay for permanent solutions to cholera,” said Mario Joseph, Director of *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux*, and the lead attorney on the case against the UN. “If the UN shortened the peacekeeping mission’s mandate by just one year, that would save \$800 million. Fewer ‘boots on the ground’ and more wells in the ground would save tens of thousands of lives every decade. That is peace keeping.”

For more information about Haiti’s cholera epidemic and the victims’ fight for justice, see www.ijdh.org.