



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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March 5, 2014

Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write as members of the Haitian-American community and the National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON) to express our deepest concerns by the United Nations' failure to take responsibility for the cholera epidemic occurring in Haiti. We are writing to you with deep respect, for your decades of support for Haiti, the rule of law and global health, and asking you to do everything in your power to ensure that Haiti's cholera epidemic is stopped and the people are provided justice.

As you know, the cholera epidemic has killed over 8,500 Haitians and sickened over 700,000 since October 2010. Every week 1,100 people are infected and nine are killed. We, in the diaspora, have lost family and friends to cholera and live in fear of losing even more. As Haitian-Americans visit their family, they are among those who contract this disease and die. In addition, cholera has an economic impact on members of the diaspora, where many of us regularly send money to our relatives. This epidemic has placed a harder financial burden on those living abroad due to funeral expenses, healthcare costs and sending funds for school fees for children whose parents have passed away.

There is overwhelming and conclusive evidence from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, top universities from all over the world and the UN's own Panel of Experts that cholera was introduced to Haiti. In words of President Bill Clinton:

*"I don't know that the person who introduced cholera in Haiti, the U.N. peacekeeper, or [U.N.] soldier from South Asia, was aware that he was carrying the virus. It was the proximate cause of cholera. That is, he was carrying the cholera strain. It came from his waste stream into the waterways of Haiti, into the bodies of Haitians" (ABCNews, 2012)*

This evidence has inspired many voices from the global community: current and former UN officials such as High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay, and former UNICEF Deputy Director

Stephen Lewis; over 100 members of the U.S. Congress; the Haitian Senate and thousands of Haitians who have taken to the streets to demand justice for the victims of the epidemic.

When the UN refused to consider the claims of Haiti's cholera victims, the victims turned to the courts of the United States for justice. We are concerned that the UN will now try to prevent the victims from having their day in court by asking your Department to intervene in favor of its impunity. We urge you and your Department, to stand for justice and international law by refusing to intervene and letting the cholera victims take their case to court.

The UN peacekeeping mandate in Haiti includes promoting the rule of law, but the UN refuses to allow the victims of its cholera epidemic to have any access to justice, despite having a legal obligation to do so. This insistence on impunity sets a dangerous precedence in Haiti, and profoundly undermines the organization's credibility to carry out any of its missions.

We are committed to advocating for justice until the victims have their day in court, and we are hopeful that you will join us in this noble cause. Thank you for your careful attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Linda Dorcena Forry

*State Senator/NHAEON member*

Below are core members of NHAEON who endorse this letter on behalf of the U.S. Haitian-American public officials:

Mayor Joseph Makhandal Champagne Jr., *Chair*  
*South Toms River, New Jersey*

Vice Mayor Marie Erland Sterile, *Vice Chair*  
*North Miami, Florida*

Honorable Judge Lionel Jean Baptiste  
*Chicago, Illinois*

Councilwoman Charnette Frederic  
*Irvington, New Jersey*

School Board Member Stanly Neron  
*Elizabeth, New Jersey*

Assemblywoman, Michael Solages  
*New York, NY*

Legislator Carrie Solages, Esquire  
*Nassau County, New York*

Councilman Antoine Dabouze,  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

cc: Andrew O'Brien, Special Representative for Global Partnerships, U.S. Department of State