



July 8, 2015

Open Letter from the Haitian-American Community to UN Secretary-General Ban and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Cholera in Haiti

Dear Secretary-General Ban and Secretary Kerry,

We are writing as members of the Haitian-American community to express our deep outrage at the United Nations' failure to take responsibility for the cholera epidemic it brought to Haiti. We are especially troubled by the dismissal of *Georges et al v. United Nations et al.*, a lawsuit brought by cholera victims seeking a just UN response, and the continued refusal by the UN to provide remedies to the victims out of court. The UN should not be permitted to evade accountability on this issue. It is imperative for the U.S. government to ensure the UN complies with its legal obligations to install the water and sanitation infrastructure necessary to control cholera and compensate the victims.

Cholera has killed over 8,900 Haitians and sickened over 730,000 since its introduction into Haiti in October 2010. Every week 630 people are infected and seven are killed. We have lost family and friends to cholera, and we live with the threat of losing more of our loved ones. We also continue to fear for our community, as Haitian-Americans visiting family in Haiti are among those who have contracted the disease and died. Our community has also taken on significant financial burdens due to cholera, as we support our relatives' funeral expenses, health care costs, and school fees for children orphaned by the epidemic.

Overwhelming and conclusive evidence—from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, world-renowned universities and the UN’s own Independent Panel of Experts—establishes, in the words of former US President Bill Clinton, that UN peacekeeping troops were “the proximate cause of cholera.” The UN’s refusal to take responsibility despite this evidence has led a growing number of world leaders and concerned citizens—including current and former UN officials such as former High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay and former UNICEF Deputy Director Stephen Lewis, over 100 members of the U.S. Congress, the Haitian Senate, and thousands of Haitian activists—to join our calls for justice. As U.S. Congressman John Conyers recently remarked, the UN’s handling of the crisis has become “a stain on the world’s conscience.”

The dismissal of *Georges et al v. UN* compounds the crisis. We regret the UN sought to evade responsibility in the case by relying on unprecedented, broad interpretations of its international agreements, and the United States government chose to assert that position in court. This position is inconsistent with the victims’ right to access court. The court’s decision makes it imperative that the UN heed the most recent calls of 77 members of U.S. Congress to immediately establish a fair and impartial settlement mechanism for the victims.

We find the UN’s response that it is “focusing on water and sanitation” disingenuous. In over four years, the UN has raised only 13% of the funds needed for its plan to eliminate cholera, while it has spent much more over that time on soldiers in Haiti. Moreover, improved access to water and sanitation, though an essential component of any comprehensive response to the cholera epidemic, is not a sufficient solution. Victims must also have access to remedies for the physical, emotional, and financial injuries they have suffered. Further, the UN must formally admit responsibility for this disaster.

The UN mission in Haiti has spent over \$2.5 billion in the last four years, much of it from U.S. taxpayers, with a primary mandate of promoting the rule of law. The mission’s refusal to comply with its legal obligations to Haiti’s cholera victims denies it the credibility necessary to effectively promote the rule of law in Haiti. It also sets a dangerous example about the ability of the powerful to avoid justice, which will come back to haunt Haitians.

We are committed to advocating for the cholera victims until they obtain justice, and urge you to take immediate action to ensure that victims of cholera receive a just response.

Sincerely,

The undersigned

Organizations:

1. Alternative Chance/Chans Alternativ, New York, NY, Michelle Karshan, Executive Director
2. Association of Exchange and Development of Activities and Partnership (AEDAP), Miami, FL, Dr. Marie Flore Lindor -Latortue, Ph.D, Executive Director (Dr. Lindor served as a member of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, 2000-2006)
3. Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad/Association des Medecins Haitiens a l'Etranger (AMHE), Dr. Maxime J-M Coles, M.D., President (AMHE is a national organization with headquarters in Brooklyn, NY and eight chapters, including one in Montreal, CA)
4. Association of Haitian Women, Inc. (Asosiyasyon Fanm Ayisyen nan Boston-AFAB), Carline Desire, Executive Director, Boston, MA
5. Center for Haitian Studies, Health, and Human Services (CHS), Miami, FL, Dr. Larry Pierre, M.D., M.P.H., Executive Director
6. Center for Self-Sufficiency, Miami, FL, Edeline B. Mondestin, RN, BSN, Executive Director
7. Collective in Solidarity With the Victims of Cholera (Collective Solidarité Avec Les Victimes de Cholera), Jimy Mertune, Representative, Orlando, FL
8. Diaspora Community Services, Brooklyn, New York, Hans Desnoyers, Acting Chief Executive Officer
9. Fanm Ayisyen nan Miyami/Haitian Women of Miami, Inc (FANM), Marleine Bastien, Executive Director, Miami, FL
10. Federation of Regional Associations of the Haitian Diaspora/ Federation des Associations Regionales Haitiennes de la Diaspora (FAREHD), Kenol Aris, MS, President, Hollywood, FL
11. Greater Boston Nazarene Compassionate Center, Inc., Boston, MA, Rev. Pierre-Louis Zephir, Executive Director
12. Guiding Light Organization (GLO), Marie Prophete, President, Manalapan, New Jersey
13. Haiti Environmental Rescue Organization (HERO), Chicago, IL, Serge Fontaine, President
14. Haiti First, Miami, FL, Justin Manuel, President

15. Haiti Priorities Project, Jacob Francois, MBA, President, Chicago, IL
16. Haiti Renewal Alliance (HRA), Washington, D.C., Firmin Backer, President
17. Haiti Solidarity Network of the North East (HSNNE), Jersey City, NJ
18. Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce of Florida (HACCOF), North Miami Beach, FL
19. Haitian American Grassroots Coalition (HAGC), South Florida, Jean Robert Lafortune, Chairperson
20. Haitian American Lawyers Association of New Jersey (HALA/NJ), Wilson Antoine, Esq., President
21. Haitian American Lawyers Association of New York (HALANY), Raffaella Belizaire, President
22. Haitian Artists Assembly of Massachusetts (HAAM), Charlot Lucien, Director, Boston, MA
23. Haitian American Leadership Council (HALEC), Freehold, New Jersey, Emmanuel Coffy, Esq., Chairman
24. Haitian American Leadership Coalition, Jacques Despinosse, Chairperson and former Councilman, North Miami, FL
25. Haitian American Professional Network (HAPN), Patrick Brutus, President, Chicago, IL
26. Haitian-American Solidarity Center (HASC), Fitzgerald Limontas, Board President, West Palm Beach, FL
27. Haitian Americans United (HAU), Nesly Metayer, Chairman, Boston, MA
28. Haitian Centers Council, Inc. (HCC), Dr. Andre K. Peck, Executive Director, Brooklyn, NY
29. Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti, Evanston, IL, Marie Lynn Toussaint, Chair
30. Haitian Cultural Association, Shaita Picard, President, Boston University, Boston, MA
31. Haitian Diaspora Advocacy Group (HDAG), Jacques P. Bingue, Interim Coordinator, Chicago, IL

32. Haitian Diaspora Federation (HDF), Judge Lionel Jean Baptiste, Executive Director
33. Haitian Educators League for Progress, Inc. (HELP), Marie Lily Cerat, President, New York, NY
34. Haitian Empowerment Foundation, Inc. (HEF), Lake Worth, FL, Ralph Cheriza, President and CEO
35. Haitian Lawyers Association (HLA), South Florida, Dotie Joseph, Esq., President
36. Haitian Professionals of Philadelphia (HPP), Stephanie Sylvain, Board Chairperson, Philadelphia, PA
37. Haitians Unified for Development and Education (HUDE), Jersey City, NJ, France Casseus, Chair/Executive Director
38. Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), Boston, MA, Brian Concannon, Executive Director
39. International Support Haiti Network (ISHN), Ray Laforest, Coordinator, Brooklyn, N.Y.
40. Jeloude 4 Womyn By Womyn, Newark, New Jersey, Jessica Elicin, Executive Director
41. La Troupe Makandal, Inc., Lois Wilcken, Executive Director, Brooklyn, NY
42. Making the Impossible Possible, Inc. (MIPO), Felina Backer, President, New York, NY
43. National Association of Haitian Professionals (NAHP), Hillside, NJ, Serge Renaud, Chairperson
44. National Center of the Haitian Apostolate Inc., Brooklyn, N.Y.
45. National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON), Mayor Joseph Makhandal Champagne Jr., Chairman
46. National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH), Washington, D.C., Dr. Joseph Baptiste, Chairman and former President, The Haitian Diaspora Federation (HDF)
47. New England Human Rights Organization (NEHRO), Josue Renaud, MS Med, President, Boston, MA

48. New York Haitian Leadership Coalition (NYHLC), Dr. Andre K. Peck, President, Brooklyn, NY
49. Ocrom Haiti Foundation, Raphael Jean-Francois, Acting President, Queens Village, NY
50. Sant La, Haitian Neighborhood Center, Inc., Miami, FL Gepsie M. Metellus, Executive Director
51. Somerville Haitian Coalition, Somerville, MA, Franklin Dalember, Director Sosyete Koukouy, Jean-Marie Denis (“Jan Mapou”), President, Miami, FL
52. Stepping Stones Resources, LLC, Wynnne-Fred Victor Hinds, Executive Director, Newark, NJ
53. The Global Haitian Diaspora Federation, Bernice Fidelia, Executive Director, Miami, FL
54. The Haitian American Committee (THAC), Marie-Marthele Guervil, Executive Director, Highland Park, New Jersey
55. The Haitian Diaspora Working Group, Jean Robert Lafortune, Chairperson
56. The Haitian League, Dr. Bernier Lauredan, President, Irvington, New Jersey
57. Unique Coalition of Minority Businesses of South Dade, Inc. (UCOMB), Jacques R. Laroche, President and former FL field ambassador for President Obama’s re-election
58. Americans for Immigrant Justice, Cheryl Little, Executive Director
59. Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), Brooklyn, NY, Opal Tometi, Executive
60. Catholic Charities Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Florida, Randolph McGrorty, Executive Director
61. Irish International Immigrant Center, Boston, MA, Director
62. 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Monica Russo, Executive Vice President, Florida Region
63. Florida Immigrant Coalition, Inc. (FLIC), Maria Rodriguez, Executive Director, Miami, FL
64. SEIU Florida State Council, Monica Russo, President

65. Centre International de Documentation & d'Information Haitienne, Caraïbienne & Afro-canadienne (CIDIHCA), Frantz Voltaire, Board President, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Political, Religious and Other Diaspora Leaders:

66. State Senator Linda Dorcena Forry, Massachusetts Legislature, Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1st Suffolk District)
67. State Senator Kwame Raoul, Illinois General Assembly, 13th Senate District
68. State Representative Daphne D. Campbell, Florida House of Representatives (District 108), State of Florida; Vice Chair, National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON)
69. Assemblymember Michaelle C. Solages, Assembly District 22, New York State Assembly, Albany, NY
70. Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte, Assembly District 42, New York State Assembly, Albany, NY
71. Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre, 11th Assembly District, New York State Assembly, Albany, NY
72. Legislator Carrie Solages (D-Valley Stream), Nassau County Legislature, Long Island, NY (representing District 3)
73. Chairman Jean Monestime, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County, FL (representing District 2)
74. Commissioner Ronald A. Brise, Florida Public Service Commission (2010-present; Chairman, 2012-14); Member, Florida House of Representatives, District 108 (2006-2010)
75. Commissioner Mack Bernard, Florida Election Commission (2014-2015) ; Member, Florida House of Representatives, District 84 (2009-2012); Commissioner, City of Delray Beach, FL (2008-2009)
76. Hon. Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm.D., Mayor, City of North Miami, FL
77. Gerard J. Cadet, Vice-President at Large, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East (UHWE), New York, NY

78. Phillip J. Brutus, Esq., Member, Executive and Central Committees, Florida Democratic Party; former member, Florida House of Representatives (representing District 108, 2000-2006); former President, Caribbean-American Democratic Caucus of Florida
79. Councilman Alix Desulme, City of North Miami, FL (representing Council District 4)
80. Charnette Frederic, MHA, LNHA, President of the Town Council, Irvington, New Jersey
81. Archange Antoine, President, Board of Education, Roselle Public Schools, Roselle, New Jersey
82. City Councilman Dabouze Antoine, Forest Park, GA
83. Councilman and former Acting Mayor Philippe Bien-Aime, City of North Miami, FL (representing Council District 3)
84. Marie Erlande Steril, former Vice-Mayor and Councilwoman, City of North Miami, FL
85. Michael A. Etienne, City Clerk (an elected position), City of North Miami, FL
86. Philippe Derosé, former Councilman and Vice-Mayor, City of North Miami Beach, and former Mayor, City of El Portal, FL (Mr. Derosé was the first Haitian American elected to public office in the United States.)
87. Andre Pierre, Esq., Adjunct Professor, Barry University, Miami Shores, and former Mayor, City of North Miami, FL
88. Joseph Makhandal Champagne Jr., Chairman, National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON) and former Mayor, Borough of South Toms River, New Jersey
89. Harry Fouche, former Consul General for Haiti in New York; economist, Chicago, IL
90. Edwidge Danticat, author
91. Dr. Jean Philippe Austin, Chief of Radiation Oncology, Aventura Radiation Oncology, Miami, FL
92. Dr. Rudolph Moise, DO, MBA, JD, North Miami, FL
93. Dr. Angelo E. Gousse, MD, Clinical Professor of Urology - Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Bladder and Prostate Health Investigations, Medical Director, Miramar, FL
94. Dr. Nadim Salomon, Infectious Diseases, Mount Sinai Hospital, Manhattan, NY

95. Dr. Maxime J-M Coles, M.D., Orthopedic Surgeon and Traumatologist; President and CEO, Coffeyville Orthopedics, Coffeyville, KS
96. Auxiliary Bishop Guy Sansaricq, Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, NY
97. Father Reginald Jean-Mary, Pastor, Notre Dame D'Haiti Catholic Church, Miami, FL
98. Rev. Dieufort Jean Fleurissaint, Executive Pastor, Voice of the Gospel Tabernacle Church, Mattapan, MA and Strategy Team Member, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO), Boston, MA
99. Rev. Mullery Jean-Pierre, Pastor, Beraca Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
100. Pastor Gilbert Toussaint, Haitian Church of the Nazarene, Jersey City, New Jersey
101. Venerable Canon J. Fritz Bazin, D. Min, Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida
102. Rev. Lemaire Alerte, Haitian Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ, Jersey City, New Jersey
103. Pastor Raphael Germain, Director, Missionary Association of Haitian Christians, Inc. (MAHC), Boston, MA
104. Rev. Saint Charles Borno, Pastor, St. Teresa of Avila Roman Catholic Church, and Coordinator of the Haitian Apostolate for the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, NY
105. Monsignor Jean Pierre, St. James Catholic Church, North Miami, FL
106. Reverend Pierre Gregoire Saint-Louis, Senior Pastor, Sinai Missionary Baptist Church, Inc., Lake Worth, FL
107. Father Donleson Thevenin, LT, CHC, USN, on active duty as a Navy Chaplain in the U.S. military and former coordinator of the Haitian Apostolate for the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, NY
108. Reverend Jean-Ricot Gay, Episcopal Church, Diocese of South Florida; Chaplin and community liaison, Vitas Healthcare, Miami, FL
109. Giles C. Charleston, Member, Board of Directors, Association of Haitian Professionals (AHP), Washington, D.C.
110. Monalisa J. Ferrari, Past President, Haitian Educators League for Progress (HELP), Brooklyn, NY

111. Luckner Bayas, PE, General Secretary, Congres des Ingenieurs, Architectes, Scientifiques et Technologues Haitiens (CIASTH), Washington, D.C.
112. Myrtha Desulme, Assistant Vice-President for Advocacy and Public Policy, Haitian Diaspora Federation (HDF) and President, Haiti-Jamaica Society
113. Jocelyn McCalla, human rights advocate and former Executive Director, National Coalition for Haitian Rights, New York, NY
114. Yvans Morisseau, Director of Advocacy, Haitian American Business Network (HABNET), and Community Advocacy Liaison, Office of Community Advocacy, Office of the Chair, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County, FL
115. Soeurette Michel, Esq., M.S.C.J., LLM, The Michel Law Firm, LLC; Board of Directors, Legal Services of Greater Miami (LSGM); Member, Education Law Committee, The Florida Bar
116. Nunotte Zama, Esq., Attorney at Law and Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice/Social Science, Roxbury Community College, Roxbury, MA
117. Jean-Robert Anantua, Chief of Operations, The Diaspora Group, Columbia, MD
118. Quener Joseph, Haitian American Leadership Council (HALEC) Representative, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
119. Patrick Eliancy, News Director, Island TV ("The Eyes and the Voice of the Haitian Diaspora"), North Miami, FL
120. Herntz Phanord, veteran radio and tv personality and host, The Herntz Phanord Show ("The Boulevard"), WSRF 1580 AM radio ("Haitian American Radio Station of South Florida"), Miami, FL
121. Rico Dupuy, radio host and Director, Radio Soleil, New York City
122. Raynald Louis, President, Haiti Media Services, and Chief Executive Officer and General Manager, Radio Kajou ("The #1 Internet Radio Serving the Haitian Diaspora"), South Florida
123. Sergo Graham, Co-Host - Voices & Perspectives, Radio Kajou, South Florida
124. Haiti Liberte newspaper, Berthony Dupont, Director, Brooklyn, N.Y

125. Kim Ives, journalist/editor, Haiti Liberté , Brooklyn, N.Y.
126. Kysseline Jean-Mary Cherestal, Esq., International Development, Washington, D.C
127. Junia Barreau, M.Sc., economist and consultant, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
128. Ludovic Comeau Jr, Ph.D., Economist and Associate Professor, DePaul University, Chicago; Professor and Trustee, Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies of Haiti (ISTEAH); President, Group for Reflection and Action for a New Haiti (GRAHN)-USA; Vice-President, GRAHN-World
129. Patrick Richard, PhD; Health Economist; Professorial Lecturer, Department of Health Policy, George Washington University, Washington, DC; Affiliate Faculty, Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; Adjunct Faculty, University of Maryland at College Park
130. Edouard Duval-carriere, artist, Miami, FL
131. Patrick Sylvain, poet and critic, Somerville, MA (Mr. Sylvain is Lecturer in Haitian Language and Culture at Brown University in Rhode Island)
132. Danielle Legros Georges, writer and professor, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA
133. Colette Bresilia, artist, activist, and philanthropist, www.colettebresilla.com, Boston, MA
134. Michele Voltaire Marcelin, poet, writer, actress, New York, NY
135. Claude Garoute, Klode Arts, Manhattan, NY
136. Myriam Nader Salomon, Nader Haitian Arts, Haverstraw, NY
137. Karen Keating Ansara, Co-Founder, Haiti Fund at the Boston Foundation, Boston, MA
138. Gerard Rudolph Volel, financial advisor, New York, NY, and former President and Chief Executive Officer, Heart to Heart Community Enrichment, Inc., Winter Haven, FL
139. Judy Prosper, Attorney, Portland, OR
140. Law Office of Chantal M. Joseph, LLC, Upper Marlboro, MD
141. Herby Duverne, MSCJ, Principal and CEO, Taino Consulting Group, and member of the Advisory Board, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), Woburn, MA

142. Organic-way Mathematics Consulting and Publishing, LLC, Archangelo Joseph, Chief Executive Officer, Nanuet, NY (Mr. Joseph is also active in the Haitian Educators League for Progress (HELP) in New York)
143. Serge JC Pierre-Louis, MD, MPH, President, DuSable Heritage Association, Chicago, IL
144. Marilys Valvourt Ewa DDS, MPH, CEO, Groupe Citadelle, and Immediate Past President, DuSable Heritage Association, Chicago, Illinois
145. Antoine Rock, Accountant; Manager, Rlp Radio, Philadelphia, PA
146. Yveline Dalmacy, MBA, M.A., Chief Executive Officer, Dalmacy Multi-Service Inc., Brooklyn, NY
147. Kerlens Tilus, Founder, Alliance Saint-Martialoise, Inc., Central Islip, NY
148. Jean Bernard Chery, President, Jean Bernard Chery, P.A., Orlando, FL
149. Isnel Sanon, Founder and Vice-President for Sales, Sanon Global LLC, Jersey City, NJ
150. Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, Executive Minister and Senior Regional Pastor, American Baptist Churches of New Jersey
151. Jean-Claude P. Cantave, President, J.C. Cantave, Inc., North Miami Beach, FL
152. Bid-Lose Olivier Francisque, RD, LDN, MPH Candidate, Benedictine University, Chicago, IL
153. Welson Joseph, Owner, WJ Expert Tree Services, Bowie, MD
154. Gina Cheron, Briarwood, NY