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154 Haitian-American Groups and Leaders Express Outrage at US and UN: Open Letter Calls for Just Response to Cholera in Haiti

Boston, July 9, 2015 – 154 Haitian-American diaspora organizations and political, religious and other community leaders nationwide called on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry to clear the path for justice for victims of cholera in a letter released on Thursday, July 9, 2015. Expressing “deep outrage” at the UN’s failure to take responsibility for the cholera epidemic it introduced to Haiti in 2010, the letter stresses the need for victims to access justice and the implementation of water and sanitation infrastructure to combat the epidemic.

Among the 89 prominent individual leaders endorsing the letter are author Edwidge Danticat and other artists; 22 current and former political leaders including Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul, MA State Senator Linda Dorcea Forry, Florida State Representative Daphne D. Campbell, and New York State Assemblypersons Rodneyse Bichotte, Michaelle C. Solages and Kimberly Jean-Pierre; 13 religious leaders; as well as five prominent doctors.

Nassau County, NY Legislator Carrie Solages said: “the UN, like all of us, must be held accountable for their actions, and work to correct the horror this outbreak caused in Haiti. Specifically, the UN must install the water and sanitation infrastructure necessary to control cholera and compensate the victims of this epidemic for their significant physical, emotional and financial burdens due to cholera.”

The 65 endorsing organizations include the major nationally recognized federations and professional groups; Haitian American Lawyers associations in New York, New Jersey, and Florida; and the Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad (AMHE) with its eight national chapters; and the National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON). Geographically, the 154 organizations and leaders hail from Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Florida, Maryland, Georgia, Kansas, Oregon, and Montreal, Canada.

“We have lost family and friends to cholera, and we live with the threat of losing more of our loved ones ... 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,” the diaspora leaders write.

The letter comes at a time when the epidemic is worsening: in the first quarter of 2015, the Haitian Government recorded a [tripling](#) of cases as compared to the same quarter of 2014. To date, cholera has [killed](#) over 8,900 people and sickened more than 730,000. The death toll from cholera in Haiti alone is now comparable to the toll of [Ebola](#) worldwide since 2010.

New York State Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre stated, “there is no denying the Haitian people are suffering and I once again renew my call to the much needed aid that is needed for the country and the United Nation’s accountability to address this crisis as efficient and quickly as possible.”

City of North Miami Councilman Alix Desulme expressed deep concern that the UN has not taken full responsibility for its actions. The Councilman urged that the UN “has a moral obligation to accept responsibility and fully help Haiti overcome this epidemic: to find a solution to the problem of not having water and an adequate sewer system.”

Florida State Representative Daphne Campbell echoed this support. Campbell stated, “As a Registered Nurse for over 30 years, as a mother, and as a State Representative of Haitian descent, I am appealing to all organizations throughout the United States and to all elected officials, both national and international, to join together to end this malicious disease for the betterment of all Haitians residing in Haiti.”

Today, these 154 Haitian-American diaspora organizations and leaders unite in solidarity to insist that the United Nations must be much more accountable to Haiti’s thousands of cholera victims.