

October 11, 2016

## **Religious and Faith-Based Sign on Letter in Support of U.S. Leadership on Haitian Cholera at the UN**

Dear President Obama and Secretary Kerry,

We, the undersigned faith-based organizations, write urging you to exercise leadership at the United Nations (UN) to ensure concrete steps are taken to eliminate the cholera epidemic [introduced](#) to Haiti in 2010 by waste from a UN peacekeeper camp and provide assistance to meet the needs of those most affected. The UN's [recent admission](#) acknowledging its role has made a renewed response possible and it is our sincere hope you will act quickly through the Department of State to support UN action to save lives and bring positive change in Haiti.

The signers of this letter count among ourselves diverse faith-based groups and institutions concerned about the cholera crisis in Haiti. Many of us have worked in cholera-affected communities, assisted Haitian cholera victims through medical treatment and water projects, and advocated with and for them before the UN. Our call for a just UN response joins the voices of [158 United States congressmen and women](#), [154 Haitian diaspora organizations](#), [UN special rapporteurs](#), [thousands of U.S. citizens](#), and the hundreds of thousands of Haitians affected by cholera.

The loss of life and suffering caused by cholera in Haiti compels action. Official estimates suggest the epidemic has killed 10,000 people and made more than 800,000 ill. Recent [scientific research](#) indicates these numbers could be dramatically higher. When [victims](#) share about the personal and communal tolls the disease has taken, they speak of lost children and parents, destroyed livelihoods, and a belief that those in power do not care about their suffering. The UN's long refusal to accept responsibility and its lackluster response have perpetuated these beliefs.

Recognizing the UN's important global role in promoting and protecting human rights, its actions in response to the cholera outbreak have, according to UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, "[upheld] a double standard according to which the UN insists that member states respect human rights, while rejecting any such responsibility for itself." With Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon pledging a new cholera action plan within the next few months, the UN's ability to recover its credibility as a moral voice will depend on its next steps.

The U.S. should play a vital role in supporting a robust response that includes the UN's formal apology to the victims and the fulfillment of its overdue promise to eliminate cholera through renewed treatment efforts and substantial investment in clean water and sanitation infrastructure. The U.S. should also provide funding for these initiatives and take a leadership role in urging other member states to do the same. Lastly, the U.S. can help ensure the UN keeps its commitments and that its new plan of action is created and implemented in consultation with victims, Haitian civil society, and the Haitian government.

The faith traditions of those undersigned compel us to stand in solidarity with members of the human family who are victims of injustice, and we do so now with those affected by cholera. Each passing day without a meaningful UN response is another chapter in an unfolding tragedy and we respectfully urge the Department of State to treat the issue with the urgency it requires.

Your leadership in this work is more important than ever.

### **Organizations & Denominations**

American Jewish World Service  
Arizona Jews for Justice  
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good  
Catholic Migration, Diocese of Brooklyn  
Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness  
Church World Service  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Faith and Money Network  
Haiti Partners  
Haiti Solidarity Network of the North East  
Heartline Ministries  
JCC Manhattan  
KareDrew Haitian Children's Foundation, Inc.  
Khmer Health Advocates Inc  
Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Maryknoll Sisters Eastern & Western Regions, USA  
Maryknoll Sisters, Hendersonville, NC  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Mercy Focus on Haiti  
N a Sonje Foundation  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the  
    Good Shepherd  
National Center of the Catholic Haitian Apostolate  
    in the US  
National Council of Churches  
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Orphelinat Cogop  
Pax Christi International  
Pax Christi USA

Presbyterian Church (USA).  
Progressive National Baptist Convention  
Saint Peter's University Social Justice Program  
The Episcopal Church  
The Poverty Initiative and Kairos Center at Union  
    Theological Seminary  
The Salvation Army  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of  
    Church and Society  
True Alliance Center Inc.  
Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
Uri L'Tzedek  
Vincentian Family Haiti Initiative  
World Renew  
World Vision  
Religions Pour la Paix, Haiti

### **Congregations**

B'nai Torah Congregation – Boca Raton, FL  
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah  
Congregation Bet Haverim  
Congregation Beth Shalom  
Haitian Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ of  
    Jersey City  
Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship  
New Generation Church of the Nazarene  
Notre Dame D'Haiti Catholic Church of Miami  
Scarsdale Synagogue  
Temple B'nai Abraham  
The Shamayim V'Aretz Institute  
YATOM: The Jewish Foster & Adoption Network  
Temple Emanuel of Tempe  
Open Table Mennonite Fellowship  
Mission Sociale des Eglises Haïtiennes-MISSEH