



ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES JURISTES DEMOCRATES
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS
ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE JURISTAS DEMOCRATAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АССОЦИАЦИЯ ЮРИСТОВ ДЕМОКРАТОВ
國際民主法律家協會
رابطة الحقوقيين الديمقراطيين العالميين

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Item 10 - Technical Assistance and Capacity Building – Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner on Haiti

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) expresses its deep concern that the UN’s “New Approach” to cholera in Haiti is at great risk of failure due to the organization’s refusal to keep its promise of meaningful consultations with victims, and its apparent unilateral decision to take individual compensation off the table.

For six years following the 2010 cholera outbreak in Haiti, the UN denied responsibility, despite overwhelming scientific evidence—including from the UN’s own experts-- that reckless sanitation at a UN Peacekeeper base brought the disease to Haiti. Four UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders took the unprecedented step of writing an Allegation Letter regarding the UN’s responsibility to the Secretary-General in 2014, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty & Human Rights issued a 2016 report calling the denials “*morally unconscionable, legally indefensible, and politically self-defeating*”.

This pressure led the Secretary-General to apologize to the Haitian people in December 2016 and launch the “New Approach to Cholera in Haiti” to eliminate cholera and respond to victims. The UN promised a “material assistance package” to those most affected by cholera in order to “express the organization’s regret” and “redress harm caused.” It pledged to consider an individual approach to victim assistance, and to consult with victims as it developed the assistance package.

After almost nineteen months since the *New Approach*’s launch, eight years since the outbreak and over 10,000 deaths, the UN has failed to keep its promises. Less than 5% of funds have been raised. Instead of meaningful and transparent consultation, the UN initiated a pilot “symbolic” victim assistance project that held discussions about development priorities with a select group in the municipality of Mirebalais. It refused to include any of the hundreds of victims who had prepared for the consultations at special training sessions or to engage in any public dialogue about the individual payment approach. Without inclusive consultation, which canvasses the individual approach, this will never effectively “express the organization’s regret”, or be accepted as justice.

We recognize the challenges to funding the *New Approach*. But we believe that fundraising efforts commensurate with the stakes involved--the credibility the organization needs to promote human rights worldwide--would bear more fruit. We also believe that talk is cheap- that meeting the victims who invested months preparing for the consultations and keeping an individual approach on the table would require few resources beyond an open mind and a few gallons of fuel.

IADL asks the High Commissioner and his office to speak out publicly on the UN’s lack of a rights-based, victim-centered approach to cholera in Haiti, and insist that the UN conduct meaningful consultations with cholera victims, including on the individual approach, in order to transform its promises into concrete results for the people of Haiti and for the UN.

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