

HAITI: MINUSTAH Must Take Responsibility for Cholera Epidemic that Killed 7000 People

Statements by UN Spokesman Nigel Fisher "False and Deceptive"

By [Mark Weisbrot](#)

Global Research, December 20, 2011

[Center for Economic and Policy Research](#) 19
December 2011

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [United Nations](#)

In-depth Report: [HAITI](#)

Washington, D.C.– The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) owes it to the half-a-million cholera victims in Haiti to take responsibility for having caused the outbreak, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) Co-Director Mark Weisbrot said today. Weisbrot also called recent statements by UN's head of Humanitarian Affairs in Haiti, Nigel Fisher, regarding the origins of the epidemic "false and deceptive."

"It is deplorable that a full 14 months after the discovery of the first cholera case, the UN continues to dodge responsibility for having reintroduced a deadly disease that has now killed a minimum of 7,000 people," Weisbrot said. "This is a case of criminal negligence, and the UN, if it is to continue to be worthy of the respect of people around the world, must own up to the fact that it caused this problem."

"Even worse, the UN, through its spokespeople, is attempting to mislead the public about the type of cholera strain that has been identified in Haiti."

Weisbrot noted that in recent comments to the BBC, [Fisher claimed](#) that "The cholera strain we have in Haiti is the same as the one they have in Latin America and Africa. They all derive from Bangladesh in the 1960s so they are all an Asian strain."

But this directly contradicts several scientific studies. Even the [UN's own report](#) states: "Overall, this basic bacteriological information indicates the Haitian isolates were similar to the *Vibrio cholerae* strains currently circulating in South Asia and parts of Africa, and not to strains isolated in the Gulf of Mexico, those found in other parts of Latin America..." and that "A careful analysis of the MLVA results and the *ctxB* gene indicated that the strains isolated in Haiti and Nepal during 2009 were a perfect match."

In a case that continues to attract international interest and attention, last month, lawyers with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux [filed for damages](#) from the UN on behalf of 5,000 cholera victims. A Brazilian organization, the Faculdade de Direito de Santa Maria, has also filed a [separate petition](#) [PDF], seeking intervention by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and calling for the UN to provide compensation to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and other affected countries, and for a fund of at least \$500,000,000 to create a public health system in Haiti.

Contact: Dan Beeton, 202-239-1460

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Mark Weisbrot](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca