

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate communication

Lawyers Without Borders Canada Joins Haitian Cholera Victims in Calling for Assistance Measures That Address Their Needs, Priorities and Rights

Port-au-Prince, October 20, 2020 - Ten years after cholera surfaced in Haiti, victims continue to lack adequate assistance, especially in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The time has come for a transparent dialogue between victims and other stakeholders to ensure the recognition and enjoyment of their rights. Ten years after the beginning of the cholera epidemic, it is time for victims to be informed, listened to, and for them to be at the center of all decision-making processes. And, above all, that we finally respond to their main request: assistance measures.” Pascal Paradis, Executive Director, LWBC

On October 21, 2020, cholera victims' associations are organizing, in partnership with LWBC, a commemoration in Port-au Prince. Together, they will honour the memory of the tens of thousands of victims who died of cholera, as well as the nearly 820,000 Haitians who have contracted the disease. It will be an opportunity to hear victims' voices, to encourage decision-makers to put them at the center of decisions, as well as to take stock of the past 10 years.

Despite the commitment made by the UN Secretary-General to “consult with victims, their families and communities in the development of the system”, the limited consultations conducted by the UN did not allow the victims most affected by cholera to express themselves adequately. This is why LWBC in collaboration with the Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED), conducted a survey with victims and Haitian experts and studied the feasibility of implementing an individual assistance approach for the people most affected by the epidemic.

“The study recommends that key stakeholders respond to the priorities, needs and concerns of cholera victims - particularly women and children - at all times and at all stages, particularly in determining the parameters of any form of assistance. It also recommends the implementation of proactive strategies to promote the participation of women and children as well as the consideration of their specific needs resulting from the differentiated impact of cholera on them” - Appolinaire Fotso, Head of Mission - Haïti.

LWBC encourages the establishment of a mechanism for a transparent and sustained dialogue with victims, their families and members of the community affected by cholera. This dialogue will enable stakeholders to identify concrete and realistic avenues for the implementation of assistance measures that genuinely respond to the rights, needs and priorities of victims. In this regard, it calls on the UN and the Haitian State to play a proactive role in establishing a transparent and rigorous process of consultation and active

participation of victims in the decision-making processes, notably on the implementation of assistance measures.

– 30 –

About LWBC

About LWBC Lawyers Without Borders Canada (LWBC) is a non-governmental international cooperation organization whose mission is to support the defence of the human rights of people in situations of vulnerability by strengthening access to justice and legal representation. Active in several countries since 2002, LWBC has been working in Haiti since 2006 to strengthen the fight against impunity and support access to justice for victims of serious human rights violations.

Media contacts

Emilie Simard, Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Québec
emilie.simard@asfcanada.ca, +1. 418 907-2607