

Security Council urges UN to combat Haiti cholera

October 10 2013, by Edith M. Lederer

The Security Council urged the United Nations on Thursday to keep up efforts to combat cholera in Haiti in a resolution extending the mandate of the peacekeeping force whose soldiers have been widely blamed for starting the epidemic.

The council unanimously adopted the resolution a day after [human rights groups](#) filed a lawsuit against the U.N. seeking compensation for thousands of [cholera](#) victims and the provision of clean water and sanitation for the impoverished Caribbean country.

The lawsuit stems from a cholera outbreak in Haiti that surfaced in 2010, and which health officials say has killed more than 8,000 people and sickened nearly 600,000. Scientific studies have shown that cholera was likely introduced to the country by U.N. troops from Nepal, whose infected waste contaminated Haiti's principal river. The disease is endemic in Nepal.

Last December, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced a \$2.27 billion initiative to help eradicate cholera in Haiti and the neighboring Dominican Republic, which share the island of Hispaniola, but the ambitious 10-year plan is underfunded.

Ban rejected a claim for compensation for cholera victims in February, citing diplomatic immunity.

The Security Council urged the U.N. to continue assisting Haitian efforts

to stamp out cholera, especially with improvements to Haiti's water and sanitation systems.

Haiti was already the poorest country in the Western hemisphere when a devastating earthquake struck in January 2010, killing up to 300,000 people and leaving millions homeless. The [cholera outbreak](#) nine months later complicated the country's recovery.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission, established in June 2004, was beefed up after the earthquake to help with recovery efforts. After presidential elections in 2011, the mission returned to its original mandate, focusing on restoring security and stability.

The resolution adopted Thursday extends the mandate of the force until Oct. 15, 2014 and reduces the troop strength to 5,021 from 6,270. It maintains the number of international police personnel at 2,601

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