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Civil Society Challenges UN Secretary-General Candidates to Take Accountability Pledge

37 Groups launch 5-part pledge on sexual exploitation and abuse, cholera

NEW YORK, July 28, 2016 — Thirty-seven civil society groups are calling on candidates for the next UN Secretary-General to take an [Accountability Pledge](#) that signals their commitment to building a more accountable and transparent United Nations.

“The next Secretary-General faces the challenge of ensuring that the UN responds justly when its peacekeepers and staff abuse or harm the very people they are sent to protect. We ask all candidates vying to become the UN’s next leader to commit to championing accountability by publicly taking this pledge,” said Beatrice Lindstrom, Staff Attorney with the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, which advocates for remedies for victims of the UN’s cholera outbreak and was one of the groups to initiate the Accountability Pledge.

Over the past year in particular, the UN has been roiled by accountability scandals, including revelations that large numbers of peacekeepers in Central African Republic have [sexually abused civilians](#), including children. In addition to what has emerged as a global crisis of sexual exploitation and abuse, UN peacekeepers in Haiti have also been linked to the [introduction of cholera](#), which has caused an ongoing epidemic in the country that has killed at least 10,000 people in the last six years.

“By failing to accept full responsibility for Haiti’s cholera epidemic and for sexual crimes committed by its own uniformed and non-uniformed peacekeepers, the UN has squandered its moral authority,” said Paula Donovan, Co-Director of AIDS-Free World and its Code Blue Campaign to end impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel. “The next Secretary-General must prove to the world, through her actions, that the UN is more concerned about protecting civilians than its own reputation.”

The pledge consists of concrete commitments: to make UN accountability a personal priority; to end the culture of impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers; and to ensure that victims of cholera are provided with remedies.

“Sexual abuse and cholera have received persistent attention throughout the selection process, but few candidates have put forth strategies to address them,” said Dr. Joia Mukherjee, Chief Medical Officer of Partners in Health, one of the organizational endorsers of the initiative.

The Pledge is endorsed by 37 civil society groups, ranging from organizations with a global reach and national human rights groups from around the world, including in countries that host peacekeeping missions.

[Twelve candidates](#) have been nominated for the post so far. The UN Security Council is expected to present a recommended candidate to the General Assembly in the fall. The new Secretary-General will succeed Ban Ki-moon in January of 2017.

[AIDS-Free World](#) and [IJDH](#) will be publishing the status of candidates' pledges on their websites and via social media, and the organizations invite all member states and members of the public to monitor the candidates' positions on UN accountability.

The full UN Accountability Pledge is available at: bitly.com/UNPledge

The Accountability Pledge is endorsed by the following organizations:

African Women's Development Fund (Ghana)
AIDS-Free World (Canada, United States)
Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice (United States)
Alternative Chance (Haiti)
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (Haiti)
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (Canada)
CenterLaw (Philippines)
Center for Accountability of International Organizations (Switzerland)
Center for Constitutional Rights (United States)
Center for Justice & Accountability (United States)
Centre for Applied Legal Studies (South Africa)
Defensa de Niñas y Niños - Internacional (Costa Rica)
European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (Germany)
Foundation for Fundamental Rights (Pakistan)
Giuristi Democratici (Italy)
Global Justice Center (United States)
Government Accountability Project (United States)
Human Rights Advocates (United States)
International Federation for Human Rights (France)
International Justice Resource Center (United States)
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (United States)
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights (United States)
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre (Nigeria)
Legal Resources Centre (South Africa)
Li,Li,Li! Read (United States)
MADRE (United States)
MATCH International Women's Fund (Canada)
Mennonite Central Committee (United States)
National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) (Haiti)
Palestinian Center for Human Rights (Palestine)

Partners In Health (United States)

Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (Mexico)

REDRESS (United Kingdom)

Report the Abuse (Switzerland)

Socio-Economic Rights Institute (South Africa)

World Federalist Movement – Canada (Canada)

World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy (Netherlands, United States)