

Cholera Epidemic: Toxic Drinking Water Killing Haitians

Real Aid is Blocked

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Foul drinking water is killing Haitians in the first epidemic of cholera on the island in over a century. Behind the TV images on German television of the misery lies a tale of international corruption and malfeasance that goes directly to former US President Bill Clinton and leading families of the so-called Haitian Oligarchy. According to Haitian civic organizations donations that could have provided permanent clean water are not being used to do so. Instead, the money is part of a racket by so-called "poverty aid" NGOs to earn huge financial gain off the outpouring of international contributions to the victims of the January devastating earthquake.

A cholera epidemic has just killed 284 Haitians and at least 3,612 more are infected and may die. This cholera is caused by drinking dirty toxic water."

According to Haitian nationals the fact that almost a full year after international governments, led by Washington, pledged billions of dollars in reconstruction help to hundreds of thousands of Haitians left homeless from the quake, the responsibility lays directly at the door of Bill Clinton, appointed UN Special Envoy to Haiti, de facto Haiti Economic Czar, controlling the Haitian economy with emergency powers.

Clinton and US Agribusiness

When he was US President, Clinton destroyed Haiti's domestic rice production with subsidies to large agribusiness rice farmers in his home state of Arkansas. Currently he is promoting a scheme to use Haitian cheap labor to compete with Chinese labor making textiles for the US garment industry.

Bill Clinton told a March 2010 US Senate hearing that he "regretted" the impact in Haiti of the free trade policies he pushed as President. "It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake," Clinton said. The rapid lowering of agricultural trade barriers in Haiti combined with US government food aid policy allowed American agribusiness to flood Haiti with cheap surplus rice forcing tens of thousands of local farmers out of business. According to the Associated Press, six pounds of imported rice cost at least a dollar less than a similar quantity of locally-grown rice.

Prior to Clinton's "free trade," Haiti could feed itself, importing only 19 percent of its food and actually exporting rice. Today, Haiti imports more than half of its food, including 80

percent of the rice eaten in the country. The result is that Haitians are particularly vulnerable to price spikes arising from global weather, political instability, rising fuel costs and natural disasters, such as the earthquake. Since the January earthquake, imported rice prices are up 25 percent.

Ezili Danto, of the Haitian Lawyers Leadership Network has issued a call for Haitians living abroad as part of what she calls the Haitian Diaspora to contribute to effective means of getting clean drinking water to the population and ignoring de facto predator NGOs out to profit from the misery and death in Haiti. “We’ve had 10-months and more of such “help” and know what to expect,” she says. Danto accuses the US State Department’s USAID of contracting out to private firms who in turn are literally, “making a killing off the poverty business,” as well as using the disaster to push Monsanto GMO seeds on Haiti.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah was the agricultural programs director for the pro-GMO Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and on the board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). AGRA and the Gates Foundation work closely with Monsanto and its research arm, the Danforth Center, pushing GMOs in Africa.

Real aid is blocked

Despite the billions donated to Haiti after the disaster, reportedly less than 15 percent of the \$4.7 billion pledged for 2010-11 at the UN Donors Conference in March has been disbursed. Donors tend to prefer large, known groups to small community ones. “The large charities have a lot of money in their bank accounts that’s not getting spent in Haiti,” said Melinda Miles of the Haiti Response Coalition, a consortium of local groups formed after the quake. “To be honest with their donors, and really be accountable to the Haitians whose names they used to raise the money, they need to put it into Haitian-led plans.”

The American Red Cross as of August had spent only a third of the \$480 million it raised for Haiti after the quake. Country spokeswoman Julie Sell said that was a result of “careful auditing and an effort not to dump money blindly on unproven projects.” That \$480 could have provided a lot of deep water wells for clean water.

Basic clean water

Cholera comes from contaminated water or food, often contaminated by feces. Cholera can kill someone within a day if untreated, from fluid loss through diarrhea and vomiting. The old and the young are most vulnerable. Right now the infection is an epidemic according to direct reports. There has not been such an epidemic in the region for a century. In Haiti now more than one million people live in tarps or tents in fields. When it rains the sanitary conditions and the mud are often abysmal. [\[1\]](#)

The January earthquake disaster entirely destroyed the clean water infrastructure of Haiti’s largest city Port au Prince. Prior to the earthquake, a third of Haiti didn’t have access to clean water. Now with over one million displaced Haitians forced to flee to rural areas outside of the city, tens of thousands are finding themselves in areas that don’t have clean water. Haiti’s rural areas mostly rely on water from polluted mountain streams. According to Lane Wood of the New York-based organization, *Charity: Water*, “We know that 80 percent of all disease is caused by lack of basic sanitation and lack of clean water.”

A UN Report released in March 2010 said that dirty water kills more people each year than

all forms of violence combined including war. According to the WHO, of the 42,000 deaths that occur every week from unsafe water and a lack of basic sanitation, 90% are children under 5 years old and 80 percent of all disease is caused by lack of basic sanitation and lack of clean water, says Wood.

In the US Congress, the Haiti Empowerment, Assistance, and Rebuilding Act sponsored by Senator John Kerry was introduced on May 5, 2010. This bill authorizes \$500 million in new spending for Fiscal Year 2011 (beginning September 30). The total amount of USAID, State, and Defense Department “humanitarian assistance” to Haiti already provided is \$1,139,632,618.

According to the United States Agency for International Development’s website, as of September 24, 2010 the United States government had provided \$1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Haiti for the earthquake. That money cannot be obligated until the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, wife of Haiti’s czar, Bill Clinton, reports to the House and Senate on how the money will be spent and that clear and achievable goals and oversight controls have been established. According to Ezili Danto, of the Haitian Lawyers Leadership Network, less than half of cent of each dollar of that \$1.1 billion went to the Haitian government. Most of it went to finance the 82nd airborne landing and activities in Haiti right after the earthquake. ‘It is debatable whether that was ‘humanitarian assistance to Haiti for the earthquake,’ she noted.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton then pledged at the March 2010 Donors meeting \$1.15 billion for Haiti reconstruction. “That money has yet to be delivered,” Danto stressed.

The duplicity of international Third World charity organizations and health issues is best typified by the world’s largest private foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which recently announced plans to “donate” some \$10 billions to vaccinate every child in Africa. That sum of money to provide sanitary drinking supplies would do far more to save lives than all the vaccines in the world.

1. Steve Harrigan, Cholera Epidemic in Haiti Highlights Deteriorating Comnditions, October 22, 2010, accessed in . <http://bit.ly/cP1Zmg>

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