Cholera in the WHO African Region

Weekly Regional Cholera Bulletin: 18 December 2023

Data reported: as of 17 December 2023
The cholera outbreak in the WHO African Region has affected 17 countries over the last two years. The trend across the region is being closely monitored and on the decline with some countries no longer having active outbreaks. As we are getting into the last months of the year, the seasonality of cholera outbreaks are issues for countries to consider and there is need to enhance preparedness and readiness, heighten surveillance and institute preventive and control measures in communities and around border crossings to prevent and mitigate cross border transmission.

In Epidemiologic week 50, seven countries Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe reported a total of 1 213 new cases. Transmission is currently active in 12 countries with no recent report of new cases from Eswatini (last case reported April 18), Republic of the Congo (last case reported 26 July), South Sudan (last case reported May 16), South Africa (last case reported 16 July) and Uganda (last case reported 1 September 2023).

Since 1 January 2022, a cumulative total of 272 025 cholera cases has been reported to the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), including 4 862 deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.8% as of 17 December 2023 (Table 1). Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Nigeria account for 80.7% (219 501) of the cumulative cases and 77.5% (3 766) of all cumulative deaths reported.
Figure 1: Distribution of cholera cases and deaths in WHO African Region, 1 January 2022 — 17 December 2023
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cumulative cases</th>
<th>Cumulative deaths</th>
<th>CFR (%)</th>
<th>Date outbreak started</th>
<th>Last update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>65 422</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>03-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>59 115</td>
<td>1 771</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Mar-22</td>
<td>17-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>38 879</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Sep-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>29 633</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Aug-22</td>
<td>17-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>26 452</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>20 554</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>29-Oct-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>12 172</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Oct-22</td>
<td>19-Nov-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>12 161</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>17-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>2 236</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Jan-23</td>
<td>12-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>1 471</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>16-May-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1 388</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>31-Aug-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1 359</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Jan-23</td>
<td>16-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>1 036</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>15-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>Jul-23</td>
<td>1-Sep-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Jul-23</td>
<td>26-Jul-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kingdom of Eswatini</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Mar-23</td>
<td>23-Jul-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>272 025</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 862</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.8</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Country Specific updates

Zimbabwe

As of 17 December 2023, cumulative cholera cases reported from the ten provinces of the country were 12,161 with 266 deaths (CFR 2.2%). During week 50, there was a 15% decrease in cases from 10,281 new cases to 8,716 cases in week 49. There was an 11% decrease in deaths reported in week 50 with 17 deaths compared to 19 deaths reported in week 49. The three provinces with the highest number of cumulative cases are Harare including Chitungwiza city (5,266), Manicaland (4,558), and Masvingo (1,121) which account for 90% (10,945 cases). The outbreak in Zimbabwe started on 12 February 2023 in Chegutu town, Mashonaland West Province.
As of 16 December 2023, a cumulative total of 1,359 cases and nine deaths (CFR 0.7%) were reported from Burundi. In week 50 new cases decreased by 58% from 12 new cases in week 49 to five new cases. There has been no death reported since week 24.

Burundi has reported cholera cases since 8 December 2022, and the outbreak was officially declared on 1 January 2023.
Figure 5: Epicurve of cases and deaths in Burundi as of 16 December 2023

Figure 6: Map of Burundi showing cholera affected areas from October 2022 to 16 December 2023
In week 49 there was a 61% decrease in new cases from 18 to seven new cases. There no deaths in weeks 48 and 49. Cumulatively, from 1 January 2022 to 10 December 2023, Cameroon has reported 20 554 cases with 484 deaths (CFR = 2.4%).

Figure 7: Epicurve of cholera cases in Cameroon from October 2021 to 10 December 2023

As of 17 December 2023, Ethiopia reported a cumulative case total of 29 633 with 430 deaths (CFR = 1.5%). As of week 50, reported new cases decreased by 30% from 379 new cases in week 49 to 265 new cases. There was a 33% decrease in deaths reported in week 50 with two deaths compared to three deaths reported in week 49.

Figure 8: Epicurve of Cholera outbreak in Ethiopia from October 2022 to 17 December 2023
Public Health Actions

- Training of 157 rapid response team members drawn from health care facilities and woreda health offices of Oromo special zone, South Wollo, North Wollo, Wag Himra zones, and Kombolcha city administration of Amhara region was conducted with WHO support.
- Cholera case management training was conducted for 187 health care workers in Kombolcha for North Wollo, South Wollo, Waghemera, Oromia special zone, Dessie town, Kombolcha town and Woldeya.
- Delivery of 10 drums (45kg) of HTH 70% to treat water using an emergency water treatment kit (EmWat) to access treated water was done by WASH partners.
- Distribution of 265,680 sachets of PUR; and 140,000 Aqua tabs were completed to disinfect drinking water at household level to IDPs in Dasenech woreda.
- Collection of 15 water samples from different sources in Benatsemay woreda of the South Omo zone was done by WASH partners and tested for bacteriological water quality tests.
- Oral cholera vaccination (OCV) community mobilization and demand promotion campaign was conducted in three districts of East Hararghe and West Guji zones of Oromia region and creating awareness for more than 40,000 communities.

Challenges/Gaps

- Delayed reporting due to security and communication/network issues.
- Shortage of cholera rapid diagnostic test kits (RDTs).
- Low risk perception (risk susceptibility & severity) and adherence of preventive measures at individual and community.
- Oral cholera vaccine (OCV) shortage for newly affected districts in their respective regions.
The last update was as of 19 November 2023 (epi week 46) with a cumulative total of 12 172 cases reported since the onset of the outbreak with 203 deaths (CFR=1.7%). The first wave that began in Oct of 2022 was controlled with last case reported on 19 September 2023 (epi week 38).

A cumulative total of 59 115 cases have been reported since the onset of the outbreak from all the 29 districts of the country as of 17 December 2023. In week 50, there was 91% decrease in new cases with one reported compared to 11 new cases in the previous week. There was no new death reported in week 50 compared to one death in the previous week. The cumulative number of deaths is now 1 771 with a case fatality ratio of 3.0%.

The 2023/2024 Cholera season began on 01 November 2023 and the reporting has been adjusted to reflect the number of cholera cases reported in the current cholera season.

**Figure 10: Epi Curve for cholera outbreak in Malawi, 3 March 2022 – 17 December 2023**

**Figure 11: Epi Curve for cholera outbreak in Malawi, June – 17 December 2023**
Figure 12: Map for cholera outbreak in Malawi, 3 March 2022 – 17 December 2023

Legend

Confirmed cases
- 71 - 487
- 488 - 1,214
- 1,215 - 2,439
- 2,440 - 4,415
- 4,416 - 12,794

Proportion of the total
- 0.12% - 0.82%
- 0.83% - 2.06%
- 2.07% - 4.13%
- 4.14% - 7.48%
- 7.49% - 21.66%

Boundaries
- Non-affected districts
- Other countries

Situation as of 10 September 2023
Data source: Malawi
Health Information and Risk Assessment
Emergency Preparedness and Response
Regional office for Africa
World Health Organization
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As of 10 December 2023, the country had reported a cumulative total of 38,879 cases, with 153 deaths (CFR 0.4%). There were 462 new cases and no reported death in week 49. There were six out of 11 provinces currently reporting active outbreaks. Four districts reported new outbreaks in week 49.

The Ministry of Health decided to restart the counting of cholera cases starting on 1st October 2023, which corresponds with the beginning of the rainy season. Thus, starting from week 47, data from the MOH consider two periods: 1st cholera outbreak from 14 September 2022 until 30 September 2023; and 2nd cholera outbreak from 1st October 2023-ongoing.

Figure 13: Epicurve of cholera outbreak in Mozambique as of 10 December 2023

Figure 14: Epicurve of cholera outbreak in Mozambique from June – December 2023
Cumulatively this year, as of 12 December 2023, there have been 2,236 reported cases and 52 deaths (CFR = 2.3%). In week 50, new cases decreased by 66% from 200 cases in week 49 to 68 new cases. There was a decrease in new deaths in week 50 by 82% from 11 deaths in week 49 to two new deaths. Thirteen districts have reported cholera outbreaks in 2023. Five districts (Chilanga, Chongwe, Luangwa, Lusaka and Vibwi) were currently in responding to the outbreak.

A new cholera outbreak was reported in Nsama district in the northern province on 10 August 2023.
The cumulative number of cases from the country since 22 January to 15 December 2023 are 1,036 and 23 deaths with a CFR= 2.2%. In week 50, new cases decreased by 75% from eight in week 49 to two new cases. There has been no reported death since week 45. This new outbreak began after the last confirmed case on 25 July 2023. Regions currently affected had increased to eight (Arusha, Dodoma, Kagera, Kigoma, Kilimanjaro, Mara, Simiyu and Singida). On 29th November 2023, the Ministry of Health received the report of suspected cases of cholera from Kagera region.

Figure 17: Epicurve of cases and deaths in United Republic of Tanzania as of 15 December 2023

Figure 18: Map of cases and deaths in United Republic of Tanzania as of 15 December 2023
The last update was as of 03 December 2023, the country had reported 65,422 cumulative cases, with 738 deaths (CFR = 1.1%) across 12 affected provinces. In week 46, there were 745 new cases with seven deaths reported. In week 48, new cases increased by 4% from 1,060 new cases in week 47 to 1,099 new cases. New deaths decreased by 87% from 31 in week 47 to four deaths in week 48.

Figure 19: Epicurve of cases and deaths in Democratic Republic of the Congo as of 03 December 2023

The cholera outbreak in the country has been ongoing since January 2022. As of 29 October 2023, there was a cumulative total of 26,452 with 674 deaths (CFR = 2.5%).

On 09 December 2023, the Gulf district management team was alerted by the SIMR officer from the CMS ADAKPAME, to the suspicion of cholera in a person presenting with diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain and dehydration. This was confirmed on 11 December by the INH laboratory, with culture identification of vibrio cholerae ogawa, and an investigation was carried out on the same date. A sample was taken during the investigation and found to be positive by the rapid cholera test.
The investigation revealed that the exposure factor was the consumption of untreated borehole water. As of 12 December 2023, there was a cumulative total of one with zero death.

**Figure 20: Map of cases and deaths in Togo as of 12 December 2023**
There have been no new cases reported since week 35. As of 1 September 2023, Uganda had reported a cumulative total of 81 suspected cases and 10 deaths (CFR=12.3%).

On 27 July 2023, the Ministry of Health had confirmed Cholera outbreak in Namayingo and Kayunga districts.

The last update was as of 31 August 2023, South Africa reported a total of 1,388 suspected cases, with 47 deaths (CFR=3.4%) from six provinces – Gauteng, Free State, North-West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. KwaZulu-Natal province recorded the third imported case of cholera as notified by the Ministry of Health on 25 July 2023.

**Conclusion**

The cholera outbreaks in the African Region have occurred in the context of natural disasters such as flooding (Mozambique, Malawi), drought (Kenya and Ethiopia), conflict (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia) and multiple disease outbreaks including Mpox, wild polio, measles, COVID-19, etc. Many countries have limited and strained resources, shortage of medical commodities, including cholera kits and Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV). Poor sanitation and unreliable water supplies with increased cross-border movements continue to serve as driving factors for the outbreak across the region.
### WHO ACTIVITIES

#### Readiness:
- 22 countries prioritized for cholera readiness.
- Collection of data using the updated web-based cholera readiness assessment tool is ongoing.
- A tracking tool for monitoring framework for the implementation of the global strategy for cholera prevention and control, 2018-2030 across the countries has been developed and rolled out.
- Capacity building on preparedness and readiness for 524 RRTs across all the nine provinces of South Africa and to develop a national cholera plan for the country.
- The identification of Priority Areas for Multisectoral Interventions (PAMIs/Hotspots) was conducted in Malawi.
- Development and mid-term review of National Cholera Plan for South Sudan and Zambia respectively is ongoing.
- Cholera readiness for countries particularly those approaching the cholera season in Southern Africa is ongoing.
- Comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the Regional Framework for the implementation of the global strategy for cholera prevention and control, 2018-2030 was conducted.

#### Response:
- Coordination and provision of technical guidance by the Cholera Incident Management Support Team of the WHO AFRO through tele-conference meetings with all AFRO countries in response.
- Technical and financial support to countries for cholera response interventions is ongoing.
- Cross-border collaborations on cholera surveillance has been strengthened.
- Deployment of staff to countries as requested by countries is ongoing.
- Provision of essential medical supplies and cholera Kits to all countries in outbreak is ongoing.
- Response and technical inputs on training across all response pillars has been strengthened.
- Technical support to countries on vaccination strategies for reactive OCV campaigns is ongoing.
- Capacity building for country teams including through webinars is ongoing.
For additional information, please contact

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Photo: WHO Ethiopia Cholera Response Surge Team, demonstrating household water treatment chemicals use for local communities in Lagahida #Somali region

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