Cholera in the WHO African Region

Weekly Regional Cholera Bulletin: 25 December 2023

Data reported: as of 24 December 2023

World Health Organization
African Region
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Situation update

Overview

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. 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 51, five countries Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe reported a total of 1,469 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 274,766 cholera cases has been reported to the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), including 4,905 deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.8% as of 24 December 2023 (Table 1). Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Nigeria account for 80.4% (220,953) of the cumulative cases and 77.0% (3,778) of all cumulative deaths reported.
Figure 1: Distribution of cholera cases and deaths in WHO African Region, 1 January 2022 — 24 December 2023
Table 1: Cholera Cases and Deaths in WHO African Region, 1 January 2022 to 24 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>66328</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>59120</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Mar-22</td>
<td>24-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>38879</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Sep-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>30174</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Aug-22</td>
<td>24-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>26452</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>20554</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td>10-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>13030</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>24-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>12172</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Oct-22</td>
<td>19-Nov-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Jan-23</td>
<td>19-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<td>16-May-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Feb-23</td>
<td>31-Aug-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1363</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Jan-23</td>
<td>24-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>1038</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>Dec-23</td>
<td>12-Dec-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>274766</strong></td>
<td><strong>4905</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Country Specific updates

Zimbabwe

As of 24 December 2023, cumulative cholera cases reported from the ten provinces of the country were 13 030 with 283 deaths (CFR 2.2%). During week 51, there was no significant change from week 50. There were 869 and 871 new cases in weeks 51 and 50 respectively. The new deaths were both 17 deaths each epi week. The three provinces with the highest number of cumulative cases are Harare including Chitungwiza city (5 773), Manicaland (4 768), and Masvingo (1 198) which account for 90% (11 739 cases). The outbreak in Zimbabwe started on 12 February 2023 in Chegutu town, Mashonaland West Province.
As of 24 December 2023, a cumulative total of 1 363 cases and nine deaths (CFR 0.7%) were reported from Burundi. In week 51 new cases decreased by 20% from five new cases in week 50 to four 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 24 December 2023

Figure 6: Map of Burundi showing cholera affected areas from October 2022 to 16 December 2023
There no report received in weeks 50 and 51. However 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 24 December 2023, Ethiopia reported a cumulative case total of 30,174 with 439 deaths (CFR = 1.5%). As of week 51, reported new cases increased by 19% from 354 new cases in week 50 to 421 new cases. There was a 50% decrease in deaths reported in week 51 with three deaths compared to six deaths reported in week 50.

Figure 8: Epicurve of Cholera outbreak in Ethiopia from October 2022 to 24 December 2023
Figure 9: Map of Cholera outbreak in Ethiopia from October 2022 to 17 December 2023

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 59 120 cases have been reported since the onset of the outbreak from all the 29 districts of the country as of 24 December 2023. In week 51, there was no percentage change in new cases with three new cases each reported in weeks 50 and 51. 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
The last received report was 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**
### Zambia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Cumulative Cases</th>
<th>Cumulative Deaths</th>
<th>CFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulatively this year, as of 19 December 2023, there have been 2,650 reported cases and 66 deaths (CFR = 2.5%). In week 51, new cases decreased by 45% from 310 cases in week 50 to 172 new cases. There was a decrease in new deaths in week 51 by 40% from 10 deaths in week 50 to six new deaths. Thirteen districts have reported cholera outbreaks in 2023. Six districts (Chilanga, Chongwe, Luangwa, Lusaka, Petauke and Vibwi) were currently in responding to the outbreak.

The most affected areas are all the sub-districts in Lusaka District (especially the peri-urban), fishing areas in Luangwa district, sewage compound in Chongwe district using water from the wells.

A new cholera outbreak was reported in Nsama district in the northern province on 10 August 2023.

*Figure 15: Epicurve of cholera cases and deaths in Zambia as of 19 December 2023*

### United Republic of Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Cumulative Cases</th>
<th>Cumulative Deaths</th>
<th>CFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cumulative number of cases from the country since 22 January to 15 December 2023 are 1,038 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.
The last update was as of 10 December 2023, the country had reported 66,328 cumulative cases, with 741 deaths (CFR = 1.1%) across 12 affected provinces. 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.
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 ADAKPAPE 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.
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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