

Current major event

New Cholera Outbreak in Somalia

Somalia is being swamped by a new wave of cholera cases in two regions - Banadir and Hiran. The Ministry of Health is now flagging up a cumulative total of 334 new cases with 1 associated death (CFR:0.29%) during January 2018.

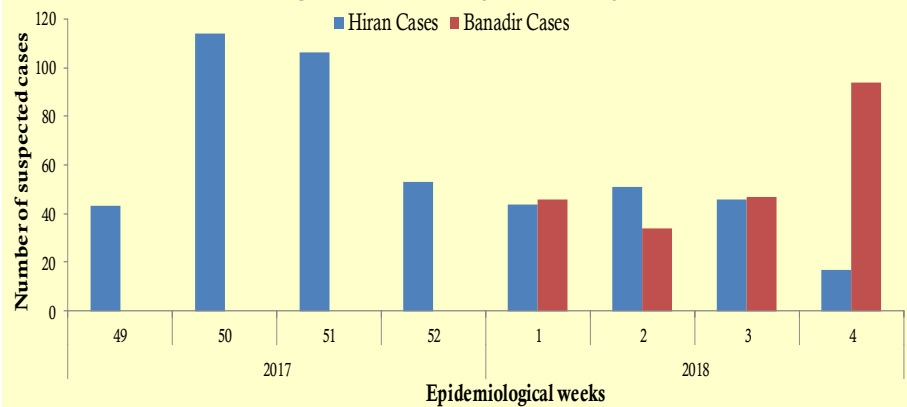
Editorial note

Cholera is an endemic disease in Somalia. It is an infection that is caused by the ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. In 2016, a severe drought began exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis in the country. Not only did this leave millions suffering from extreme hunger, but it also increased the risk of water-borne disease transmission due to the impurity and limited availability of the safe water supplies.

Cholera has spread through the drought-stricken Somalia at an alarming rate. This new wave of reported cases was being observed in the Beletweyne district of the Hiran region in December 2017. A total of 158 cases were reported from the region during the first month of 2018. The cluster of cases was confirmed to be amongst people living on the banks of the Shabelle river. Since the safe water sources have been exhausted, these individuals resorted to using the contaminated river water. Due to uncontrolled movement of people in the country, the number of cases increased in other regions. Another wave of cases scattered across 11 districts of the Banadir region (see table) and accumulated to 176 cases with 1 associated death (CFR: 0.56%) as of epidemiological week 4 (2018). Thus, the new outbreak has resulted in a total of 334 cases with 1 associated death (CFR: 0.3%). Amongst these reported cases 49% were female and 70% were below 5 years.

An oral cholera vaccination (OCV) campaign was launched in March 2017 and ran up to October 2017, targeting 9 different high-risk areas across central and southern regions of Somalia. The vaccination coverage reached 92.7% in phase I and 94.1% in phase II of the campaign. These efforts have led to a successful containment of the outbreak in the last year. However despite the campaign's success, 96% of the 2018 cases reported in Hiraan and Banadir did not receive the OCV, as evident from the reported data.

Number of suspected cholera cases in Hiran and Banadir regions, epi week 49-04 (2017-2018)



Suspected cholera cases and deaths in Somalia in 2018 by district

Region	District	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
Banadir	Heliwaa	2	0	0
	Daynile	30	1	3.3
	Dharkenley	20	0	0
	HamarJajab	4	0	0
	Hamar Weine	2	0	0
	Hodan	55	0	0
	Howlwadag	8	0	0
	Karan	2	0	0
	Madina	38	0	0
	Wardigley	3	0	0
	Shibis	1	0	0
Hiran	Beletweyne	158	0	0
	Buloburte	0	0	0
	Jalalaqsi	0	0	0
Total		334	1	0.3

WHO supported Ministry of Health for development of cholera treatment centers in Banadir hospital and Beletweyne hospital for case management. Likewise, rapid response teams and community health workers were deployed to support the investigation, the immediate referral and the management of mild cases in the community. The WHO has been working towards preventing further spread of the disease, though the ongoing humanitarian crisis and security concerns are swamping most efforts.

This imminent cholera outbreak serves as a forewarning for Somalia and other developing countries globally to ensure implementation of appropriate measures such as durable water and sanitation infrastructure and promotion of adequate hygiene practices, especially in times of crisis. Proper case management, timely introduction of vaccines and initiation of community awareness activities are essential factors in reducing morbidity and mortality during those outbreaks.

Update on outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS in Saudi Arabia; **cholera** in Somalia; **cholera** in Yemen; **dengue** in Sudan.

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1) [359 (122), 34%]

Egypt (A/H9N2) [4 (0)]

Avian influenza A (H7N9): 2013-2017

China [1,565 (612), 39.1%]

Chikungunya: 2016-2018

Pakistan [8,468 (0)]

Cholera: 2017-2018

Somalia (2018) [334 (1), 0.29%]

Yemen [1,051,789 (2252), 0.21%]

Diphtheria: 2018

Yemen [996 (64), 6.42%]

Bangladesh [5,253 (37), 0.7%]

Dengue fever: 2017-2018

Sudan [197 (3), 1.5%]

MERS: 2012-2018

Saudi Arabia [1,786 (699), 39.1%]

Wild poliovirus: 2018

Afghanistan [3 (0)]

Yellow Fever: 2017-2018

Brazil [145 (20)] 13.7%