

Current major event

Disease outbreaks in Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), January to June 2018

Since beginning of the year 2018, the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) has experienced ongoing and new outbreaks of emerging and re-emerging infectious disease in many countries. A number of these outbreaks are continuing from the previous year.

Editorial note

In the EMR region, a greater number of countries are currently facing complex and protracted humanitarian emergencies. According to the WHO's grading of emergencies, 3 countries in the EMR has Level- 3 emergencies, 4 countries in Level-2, and 1 country is in Level -1 emergency.

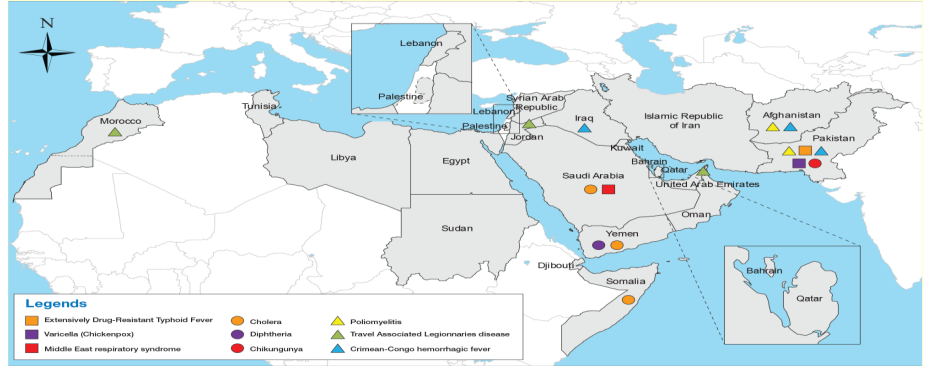
The ongoing cholera outbreak in Yemen, in terms of magnitude and protracted nature, with over one million cases and over two thousand deaths reported so far, has been largely driven by exposure of vulnerable populations to conditions of poor access to health services, inadequate safe drinking water, and poor sanitary conditions. Somalia, with the second largest and ongoing protracted cholera outbreak in the Region has faced similar dynamics (*See map*). Sporadic imported cases of cholera, mainly from neighbouring Yemen, have been reported in Saudi Arabia but so far, there has been no local transmission or further spread of cholera in the country.

Yemen has also experienced large and prolonged outbreak of diphtheria since 2017 due to collapse of the national immunization programme and poor access to health care.

Since the beginning of 2018, Iraq has reported 8 sporadic cases of Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) including 6 deaths. Afghanistan on the other hand has had sustained upsurge of reported cases of CCHF since April 2017. The prolonged upsurge of the disease in Afghanistan could be due to ongoing protracted state of internal conflict and insecurity that has affected local coping capacity for effective preventive and control of high threat infectious diseases such as the CCHF.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has reported the most number of outbreaks among the EMR countries so far. These include the

Disease outbreaks reported in EMR from January to June 2018



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Extensively Drug-Resistant (XDR) Typhoid Fever cases reported in Pakistan.

Age groups (Years)	Total cases
0-4	473
5-10	342
11-14	116
15-24	121
25-34	57
35-44	61
≥45	21
TOTAL	1 110

ongoing outbreak of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid fever. The outbreak started in January and as of 14 July 2018, a total of 1 110 cases of XDR typhoid fever were reported (*See table*). Other disease outbreaks the country has reported over last six months are: Vericella (Chickenpox), Chikungunya, CCHF and Poliomyelitis.

The outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries has persisted since 2012. Even though there has been no large hospital outbreaks in 2018, two small scale hospital outbreaks and two household clusters have been reported this year, so far, in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to protracted emergencies in the region, climate change has affected survival, reproduction, and distribution of high threat pathogens, as well as their vectors and hosts. These changes coupled with human population movements and rapid urbanization, specially in poor urban slums, have contributed to increased frequency and severity of outbreaks in recent time. Effective prevention and control will require good understanding of local epidemiology of the infectious diseases, consideration of local determinants of outbreaks, and adaptation of interventions to local settings.

Update on outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS in Saudi Arabia; **cholera** in Somalia; **cholera** in Yemen; **Diphtheria** in Yemen.

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)]

Ebola virus disease (EVD): 2018

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	[53 (29), 54.7%]
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Rift Valley fever : 2018

Kenya	[94 (10), 10.6%]
Uganda	[8 (3), 37.5%]
South Sudan	[10 (3), 30%]

Cholera: 2017-2018

Somalia	[5 880 (40), 0.7%]
Yemen	[1 121 143 (2 316), 0.2%]
Tanzania	[3 183 (63), 2.0%]

Diphtheria: 2018

Yemen	[1 904 (98), 5.1%]
Bangladesh	[7 986 (44), 0.5%]

MERS: 2012-2018

Saudi Arabia	[1 853 (717), 38.7%]
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Yellow Fever: 2017-2018

Brazil	[1 266 (415), 32.7%]
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