

Current major event

Cholera Situation in Eastern Mediterranean Region 2022

Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) continued to experience recurring cholera outbreaks in the last two decades and it's becoming a major public health threat to the Region with increased social and economic consequences. In 2022, 6 countries have confirmed cholera outbreaks with over 150 000 cases and 101 deaths.

Editorial note

Cholera is an extremely virulent disease that can cause severe acute watery diarrhoea. It takes between 12 hours and 5 days for a person to show symptoms after ingesting contaminated food or water. Cholera affects both children and adults and can kill the infected case within hours if untreated.

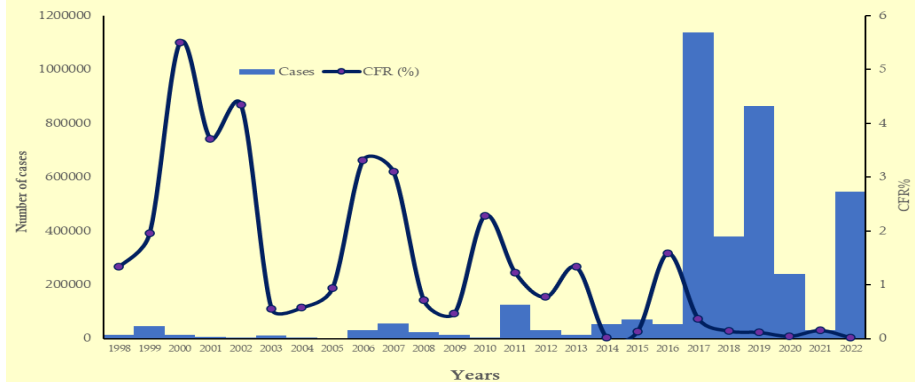
Cholera is endemic in many countries in the EMR. Most of these countries are also experiencing acute or protracted complex humanitarian emergencies. According to the WHO grading of public health events and emergencies, most of the countries reporting cholera outbreaks in 2022 are in either grade 3 or grade 2 emergencies. Grade 3 emergency countries in the Regions with cholera outbreak include Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia, while Iraq, Pakistan and Sudan are grade 2 emergencies.

Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) and cholera are the most commonly reported epidemic-prone diseases in the Region (*see graph*). Afghanistan, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen are reporting most of the cases. Somalia, Afghanistan and Yemen continued to report increased number of cholera cases, despite concerted efforts by health authorities and partners to scale up the response measures.

During 2022, more than 100 000 cases and 101 deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.07% were reported to WHO from 6 cholera endemic countries of the Region. Pakistan only reported 77% of the total cases. The second most affected country during this year is Afghanistan as it reported 15 252 cases and 34 associated deaths. Islamic Republic of Iran reported 51 imported cases (laboratory confirmed cases) (*see table*).

Pakistan is currently reporting the highest number of AWD and cholera cases and the outbreak spread to most of the provinces. On 29 April 2022, health authority in Sindh province confirmed cholera outbreak in Karachi. Since 1 January till 18 July, a total of 120 965 suspected cholera cases with 579 laboratory confirmed cases and 11 deaths (CFR 0.01%) were reported across the country.

Trend of suspected AWD/cholera suspected cases reported in EMR countries, 2000 - July 2022



AWD/ suspected and confirmed cholera cases reported in EMR-2022

Country	Suspected cases	Confirmed cases	Deaths	CFR %
Pakistan	120 965	579	11	0.01
Afghanistan	15 252		34	0.20%
Yemen	11 375	11	11	0.10%
Somalia	8040	152	37	0.50%
Iraq	690	465	8	1%
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		51 (imported cases)	0	0

Afghanistan is the second most affected country in the Region by cholera outbreak and it has spread to many provinces. Insecurity and poor access to the affected areas are hampering the expansion of cholera response activities in the affected areas. The outbreak affected displaced population living poor settlement with limited access to basic essential health services and sanitary conditions. Now the country is reporting suspected AWD and cholera cases from 40 districts in 12 affected provinces.

The ongoing cholera outbreaks in the affected countries are linked to contaminated water compounded with poor sanitary conditions and poor access to safe water in the affected areas. Health authorities and partners have scaled up response activities. Some countries are considering the introduction of Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaigns to protect the high risk groups. Somalia and Yemen introduced OCV and implemented major campaigns to reach thousands of people.

WHO is working with the health authorities and partners to scale up critical response interventions, including enhancing surveillance and laboratory capacities, ensuring adequate sanitation and safe drinking water, and promoting hygiene practices and behavior change in communities and among health care workers. Cholera vaccines should be used only to supplement other preventive measures.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern

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

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2022

Afghanistan	[183 617 (7732), 4.2%]
Bahrain	[647 935 (1505), 0.2%]
Djibouti	[15 690 (189), 1.2%]
Egypt	[514 413 (24 750), 4.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[7 272 727 (141 486) 1.9%]
Iraq	[2 402 311 (25 267), 1.1%]
Jordan	[1 705 116 (14 070), 0.8%]
Kuwait	[650 085 (2558), 0.4%]
Lebanon	[1 138 458 (10487), 0.9%]
Libya	[502 642 (6431), 1.3%]
Morocco	[1 250 510 (16 178), 1.3%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[672 039 (5664), 0.8%]
Oman	[394 215 (4628), 1.2%]
Pakistan	[1 546 252 (30 440), 2%]
Qatar	[393 834 (680), 0.2%]
Saudi Arabia	[803 158 (9230) 1.1%]
Somalia	[26 900 (1361), 5.1%]
Sudan	[62 874 (4955), 7.9%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[55 979 (3150), 5.6%]
Tunisia	[1 114 370 (28 942), 2.6%]
United Arab Emirates	[972 007 (2325), 0.2%]
Yemen	[11 848 (2149), 18.1%]