

Cholera death toll climbs to 30 in Zimbabwe



Harare, September 18 (RHC)-- The death toll in Zimbabwe's cholera outbreak has risen to 30, as the health minister announced new antibiotics were being used after the disease strain was found to be resistant to some drugs.

The cholera outbreak, first detected in a township outside the capital Harare earlier this month, prompted the government to declare an emergency in the city after at least 3,000 cases were reported.

"Although I cannot say we have contained the disease as yet, we are moving swiftly in all provinces of the country," health minister Obadiah Moyo told reporters in Harare. "We have moved into the second line of antibiotics, which is azithromycin after the first line of antibiotics — ciprofloxacin and ceftriaxone — have become resistant to the disease."

Moyo said rubbish dumps would be removed from high-risk areas of Harare, sewer pipes would be repaired and street food vendors had been ordered to halt work. Authorities have banned public gatherings in the city as a health measure, forcing the opposition MDC party to call off a major rally several days ago.

Newly-appointed Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube last week launched a crowd-funding effort to raise money to fight the outbreak, publicizing bank details on Twitter and appealing for donations. Zimbabwe suffered

its worst cholera outbreak in 2008. A total of 4,000 people died and at least 100,000 people fell ill.

UNICEF advised Zimbabweans to prevent cholera from spreading by regular hand-washing, drinking only safe water, washing food, cooking it thoroughly and avoiding shaking hands.

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