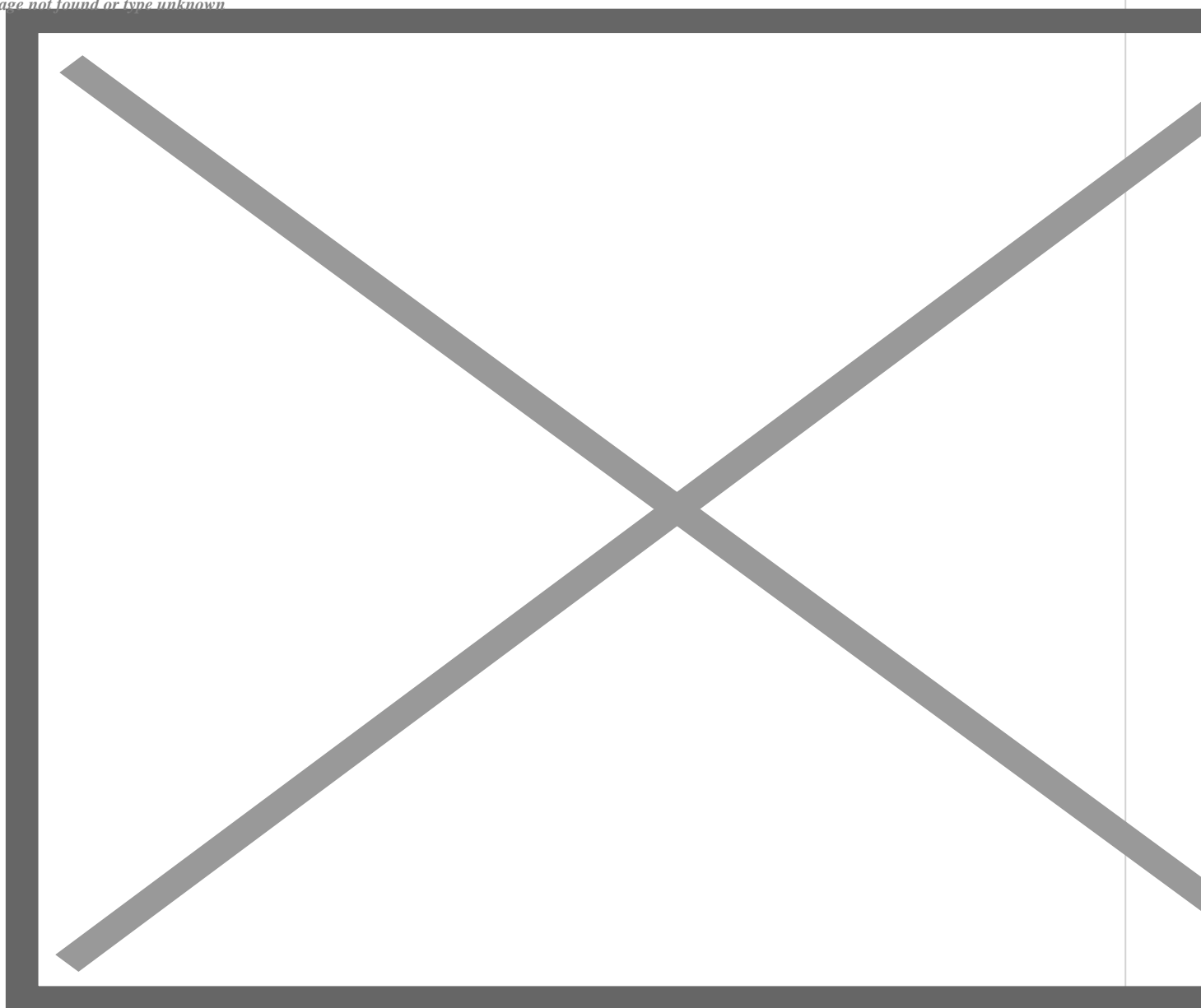


Latin America threatened by dengue fever

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By María Josefina Arce

It has been almost a year since the World Health Organization decreed the end of the global health emergency due to COVID 19.

However, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, as warned by the WHO, continues to be a threat, to which Latin America is added another health problem, dengue fever.

The virus transmitted by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito has been gaining ground in the region to such an extent that PAHO, the Pan American Health Organization, has expressed its concern and issued nine epidemiological alerts in recent months.

The organization stated that up to last March, 3,500,000 cases and more than 1,000 deaths had been recorded in the region, which represents three times more cases than those reported for the same date in 2023.

Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay are the most affected countries, but there has also been an increase in the number of patients in Mexico, Costa Rica and Guatemala.

Among the causes of this increase is climate change. Experts have repeatedly warned about the health effects of this phenomenon, which brings with it high temperatures and extreme meteorological events with heavy rains, which favor the incidence and spread of dengue due to the proliferation of mosquito breeders.

In fact, this summer South America has suffered temperatures that have exceeded 40 degrees Celsius, a combination of the El Niño phenomenon and global warming.

But it is not only environmental factors that have an impact on the proliferation of the vector and the increase in dengue cases; there are also social factors, which PAHO has warned about.

These include the lack of access to drinking water and sanitation, a problem still pending in Latin America and the Caribbean, where millions of people are deprived of this human right.

The region is far from meeting Sustainable Development Goal number six, which refers to ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

This is why PAHO has insisted on the importance of making progress on this goal, of increasing epidemiological surveillance and of preparing health systems for the dengue boom, which were already under heavy pressure during the COVID 19 pandemic and showed multiple weaknesses in many countries.

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