

World Health Organization Says Yemen Cholera Outbreak Claims 34 Lives in Less than Two Weeks



Geneva, May 10 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization (WHO) says cholera has claimed the lives of at least 34 people across Yemen in less than two weeks, several months after the outbreak of the infectious disease was declared in the conflict-plagued impoverished Arab country.

A WHO official said that more than 2,000 were taken ill in nine governorates across the country. "There have been hundreds of cases of acute watery diarrhea in nine governorates, including the capital Sanaa, during the period of April 27 to May 7," AFP quoted the unnamed official as saying.

Doctors Without Borders also said it had independently treated more than 780 cases of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea in Yemen since March 30th. The charity group, also known as the MSF by its French acronym, said patients were traveling dozens of kilometers in difficult conditions to reach treatment centers.

Shinjiro Murata, the MSF's head of mission in Yemen, expressed concern over the rising number of cholera cases. "We are very concerned that the disease will continue to spread and become out of control," Murata said, adding, "Humanitarian assistance... needs to be urgently scaled up to limit the

spread of the outbreak and anticipate potential other ones."

In early October last year, the WHO announced the grim news of cholera outbreak in Yemen, and three weeks later it reported that the number of cholera cases across the country, including the capital, had soared to hundreds. Last year, nearly 130 people lost their lives due to an outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhea in Yemen.

Cholera, which causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, is transmitted through contaminated drinking water and could prove fatal in up to 15 percent of untreated cases.

Over two years of Saudi Arabia's full-scale war on the impoverished country have put more than half of all health facilities in Yemen in a state of complete or partial shutdown. Furthermore, there are critical shortages in medical doctors in over 40 percent of all districts, according to the Yemeni Health Ministry.

In mid-August last year, at least 19 people were killed and 24 others were injured when a Saudi airstrike hit an MSF hospital in Hajjah's Abs district. Nearly 3.3 million Yemeni people, including 2.1 million children, are currently suffering from acute malnutrition, with more than seven million Yemenis facing the plight of starvation. The figures, however, could worryingly increase if the Saudi war machine continues to breathe fire on Yemeni people.

Since March 2015, Yemen has been heavily bombarded by Saudi warplanes as part of a brutal campaign against the impoverished country in an attempt to reinstall Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Yemen's president who has resigned and is a staunch ally of Riyadh, and crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Latest tallies show that the imposed war has so far killed over 12,000 Yemenis and wounded thousands more. The Saudi aggression has also taken a heavy toll on the country's facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

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