

World Health Organization warns number of measles cases reaches historic record high



Geneva, August 14 (RHC)-- According to a report issued by the World Health Organization, so far this year, a total of 364,808 measles cases have been reported -- almost three more times than during the same period of time last year with 129,239 cases, the organization warned on Tuesday.

The WHO warned: "This follows successive yearly increases since 2016, indicating a concerning and continuing upsurge in the overall measles burden worldwide."

The countries registering the highest number of cases are Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and Ukraine, while major outbreaks are ongoing in Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan and Thailand.

The organization highlighted that the largest outbreaks occurred in areas where people lacked access to the vaccine, but other concerning outbreaks were happening even in countries with high national vaccination rates because of the anti-vaccine movement, among other.

Last week, another report issued by WHO found that more than one in 10 children - or 20 million worldwide - missed out last year on vaccines against life-threatening diseases such as measles, diphtheria and tetanus.

"Measles is a real-time indicator of where we have more work to do to fight preventable diseases," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF's executive director said then. In 2018 for example, the number of measles cases around the world more than doubled, to almost 350,000.

Almost half the world's unvaccinated children are in just 16 countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

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