

PAHO warns of advancing cholera outbreak in Haiti

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Hundreds of suspected cases, dozens of confirmed cases and 36 cholera deaths have been reported up to mid-October. | Photo: EFE

Washington, November 2 (RHC)-- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has warned about the situation in Haiti amid the cholera outbreak that has caused 36 deaths. The regional health agency said that after three years free of cholera, Haiti is once again experiencing an outbreak that puts the lives of 1.2 million children residing in areas where cases of the disease have been reported at risk.

"The country is once again experiencing an outbreak with hundreds of suspected cases, dozens of confirmed cases and 36 deaths from the disease as of mid-October," PAHO said. For its part, the United Nations, through its news portal, warned that cholera is not the only danger faced by children in that country, as they are also threatened by violence and malnutrition.

"The violence that plagues Haiti threatens the fundamental rights of children to life, education, clean water, sanitation, health and nutrition," it said, citing data from the Committee on the Rights of the Child. According to the Committee, "violence, insecurity and economic hardship have left many of Haiti's poorest families without access to clean water, hand-washing soap and other basic sanitation services, increasing the risk of disease."

With respect to child nutrition, the agency noted that the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has counted some 100,000 children under five years of age with severe acute malnutrition. They also explained that the situation is alarming because malnourished children are at greater risk due to the cholera outbreak that is developing.

In view of this situation, the entity emphasized the need for immediate action to protect children in that country, being the most vulnerable group of the population. "The international community must act immediately to support the national authorities in guaranteeing the rights of millions of Haitian children to live, grow, learn and prosper in a climate free of violence."

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