



WHO experts visit cholera treatment centres to review progress and assess challenges. The outbreak in Yemen is the worst in human history (Photo: Abdinasir Abubakar/WHO)

12 June 2019 - To support the ongoing scale-up of cholera response efforts in Yemen, from 18 to 25 May 2 World Health Organization (WHO) experts deployed to Sana'a. As part of the

scale-up, WHO has increased technical support to the country, which has been facing the worst cholera outbreak in history since 2016. Deployed staff expertise ranges from oral cholera vaccination to laboratory, water and sanitation, and community engagement and health promotion.

Cholera in Yemen has affected 1.7 million people and cost 3502 lives since the start of the outbreak. WHO supports the Ministry of Public Health of Yemen and health partners on the ground by focusing on coordination, case management, laboratory diagnostics, infection and prevention control in health facilities, water and sanitation, and oral cholera vaccination campaigns.

Despite the dire situation, these key response activities recently proved their crucial value. In the first 4 months of 2019, heavy rains and the overall humanitarian crisis increased the number of cholera cases and deaths. Yemen's Health Minister declared a state of emergency and began scaling up essential interventions with WHO and other international partners, and by April 8 the first results of the scale-up became evident. The number of new cholera cases and deaths began to fall, and have continued to do so through to the end of May.

To sustain this decrease, the recent mission had WHO experts reviewing cholera response progress and remaining challenges. In discussions with water and health authorities (including senior Health Ministry officials) and partners on the ground, key issues that emerged were improving case management, monitoring antibiotic susceptibility, expanding cholera vaccination campaigns, and strengthening cholera surveillance and early warning systems. WHO will support implementation of the detailed recommendations technically and financially.

Although the reversing trend and despite the best efforts of WHO, Yemen's Health Ministry, and partners, the underlying causes of Yemen's cholera outbreak are far from resolved. To stay up to date with the latest epidemiological data on this important crisis check [here](#) , and for more information on infectious hazard management in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region [subscribe here](#)

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