

31 December 2018 – The Ministry of Health of Somalia has announced 26 new suspected cases of cholera, with no deaths, for epidemiological week 51 (17 to 23 December) of 2018. Of these new cases, 54% (14) are females, while 54% (14) are children below five years of age. The cumulative total cases are 6731, including 46 associated deaths (case-fatality rate 0.7%), since the beginning of the current outbreak in December 2017. Of the 351 stool samples collected since the beginning of 2018, 104 tested positive for *V. cholerae*. The latest stool samples tested in the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) in Mogadishu isolated *Vibrio Cholerae*, serotype O1 Ogawa.

The current cholera outbreak started in Beletweyne in Hir-Shabelle state in December 2017. This followed heavy rains that caused flash floods and contamination of water sources in the state. The outbreak spread down the river to Middle Shabelle, Kismayo and the capital Mogadishu. There has been a decline in the number of AWD/Cholera cases reported from a peak of 396 in week 23, down to 26 cases in week 51 and the trend remains stable for the last four weeks.

This week, active transmission was observed in seven districts in the Banadir region: Darkenley, Daynile, Hamarjabja, Hodan, Madina, Hamar Weine, and Yaqshid. The cases in Banadir represent 44.3% of the total number of reported cases in the country from the beginning of the outbreak. The Banadir region, which includes Mogadishu City, has one of the highest concentrations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have limited access to safe water and sanitation. All cases reported this week are among IDPs.

WHO continues to provide leadership and support to the health authorities and partners to mitigate the outbreak, with activities including case management, surveillance, laboratory investigations, water sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and risk communication. A total of 11 Cholera Treatment Centres were opened up in the five states to manage the cholera cases during the outbreak, although the decreasing number of cases has led to the closing of 10 of these facilities since the beginning of 2018.

Oral cholera vaccination has contributed to the mitigation of the cholera outbreak in the country. In February 2019, an OCV campaign will be implemented targeting 660 000 people living in IDP camps in six high-risk districts in the Lower Jubba, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, and Banadir regions.

