



Mogadishu, 22 June 2019 – Somalia has just launched one of Africa’s largest immunization campaigns using oral cholera vaccines (OCV). The campaign, which runs from 22 to 28 June 2019 in high-risk areas of Somalia, will vaccinate more than 650 000 people aged one year and above to eliminate the risk of the disease among vulnerable populations and to prevent recurring cholera outbreaks in the country.

Somali health authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO) are conducting the campaign with the support of the United Nations Children’s Fund, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Task Force for Cholera Control.

“No one should die of cholera in the 21st century, especially when we have an affordable and easily administrable cure. It remains our collective responsibility to save lives and end cholera in Somalia. We remain committed to keeping the country free from future cholera outbreaks,” said

Dr Mamunur Rehman Malik, WHO Representative in Somalia.

During the 2 rounds of the campaign, vaccinators will go house to house in the 6 districts of Heliwa, Kahda and Harmajajab in Banadir, Balad and Afgoye in the South West State, and Kismayo in Lower Juba offering oral cholera vaccine.

Vaccination teams that include 126 supervisors at national, regional and district level and 112 vaccinators will aim to vaccinate around 150 people a day. A total of 217 community mobilizers have been deployed to conduct house-to-house visits and inform communities about campaign dates and benefits of the vaccines prior to beginning of the campaign.



The Minister of Health of Somalia HE Dr Fauziya Abikar Nur commented on the cholera situation in Somalia, highlighting challenges and efforts, saying, “Cholera remains one of our major public health threats. We now have the means and solutions to end cholera in Somalia. We continue to work with WHO and our other partners to save lives and prevent cholera on a long-term sustainable basis.”

Since the current cholera outbreak began in January 2019, Somalia has reported 1041 cases of suspected cholera, including one related death, in 25 districts of the States located in the basins of the Jubba and Shabelle rivers.

In 2017, the country faced one of the largest outbreaks in its history, with 78 784 cases, including 1159 deaths.

A year later, in 2018, Somalia saw a reduction in the number of reported cases of cholera and related deaths, largely due to improved disease surveillance and case management, with the reported number of cases at 6448, including 45 deaths. The case–fatality rate, a measure of the severity of the disease, defined as the proportion of confirmed deaths of a specified disease or condition, for Somalia dropped from 1.47% in 2017 to 0.69% in 2018. Currently, in 2019, the overall case–fatality rate from cholera in Somalia is 0.09%.

The use of OCV in combination with other proven interventions such as improving access to safe water and sanitation and improving hygiene will help to eliminate the risk of recurrent cholera outbreaks faced by the country.

**Related link**

[Acute watery diarrhoea/cholera situation reports](#)

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