



A child receives an oral cholera vaccine during the campaign. Photo: WHO

15 March 2021 – Yemen's conflict has resulted in a large-scale public health crisis, with a spiral of epidemic-prone infectious diseases, including the worst cholera outbreak ever recorded, with over 2.5 million suspected cases since October 2016. In 2020, a total of 230 540 suspected cholera cases and 84 associated deaths were reported nationwide. Areas that lack access to clean water and proper sanitation conditions are the worst hit.

WHO and health partners have been supporting health authorities to respond to this ongoing cholera outbreak. The response has included case management, surveillance and laboratory diagnostic capacity, hotspot mapping and oral cholera vaccine (OCV) campaign planning and implementation, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support, and risk communication.

As part of this effort, in December 2020 and February 2021, WHO, in cooperation with UNICEF and the World Bank through the Emergency Health and Nutrition Project, supported the Ministry of Public Health and Population in conducting an oral cholera vaccination campaign in Hajr district in Hadramaut governorate and Al Dhalea and Al Azareq districts in Al Dhalea governorate.

As many people in these rural districts face difficulties in reaching health care centres, the campaign has assigned fixed and mobile teams to cover over 32 000 households and over 188 000 people in the 2 governorates.

"Because of the continuing conflict and COVID-19 consequences, access of the Yemeni people to basic health services remains a major concern. We have to proactively reach out to the population in need, including those in camps for the internally displaced," said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Representative in Yemen.

As of 10 March 2021, Yemen's health authorities reported 2590 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 655 associated deaths, but health partners remain concerned that under-reporting may be continuing in some areas of the country due to many reasons, including lack of testing facilities and delays in seeking treatment. The pandemic has further worsened the population's access to, and utilization of, health services.



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