27 February 2020 – In a health centre called the 26th September, 50-year-old Mariam fought for her life as cholera and heart disease ravaged her body. Mariam was rushed to the health centre after suffering from severe watery diarrhoea, dehydration and hypertension.

“She was shaking uncontrollably, and I was terrified to lose her especially as she also suffers from heart disease,” said Waheed, Mariam’s young son.

Two days have passed since Mariam was hospitalized, now she is receiving treatment for cholera.

“I had suspicions that my mother had cholera. I was infected with cholera 2 years ago, so I understood the symptoms, this is why I rushed her to the same health centre where I was treated successfully,” Waheed added.

In late 2016, the world’s largest cholera epidemic swept Yemen, and at present more than 1.3 million suspected cases of cholera have been recorded. This, as well as other disease outbreaks, is the inevitable result of the ongoing conflict and fragile health system.

Though the outbreak has been controlled, Yemen will continue to see seasonal spikes in cases for years to come. During the winter season, however, we see a decrease in reported cases — a welcome respite.

“We used to receive 80 to 100 cases a day from different governorates at the peak of the cholera outbreak – now we receive on average less than 10 cases a day. But we still have to remain alert because in this context we know that needs are still high. We will continue to fight this disease,” said Dr Amal Al Haidari, who works in the 26th September health centre.
In Al Sadaqa hospital in Aden governorate, lies Mohammed, 60 years-old, displaced from the Hays district of Hudaydah governorate, both active frontlines.

He received treatment at the diarrhoea treatment centre in Al Saddaqa hospital.

“We no longer have homes and we risk losing our health as well. We struggle for our most basic needs – my only hope now is to see my husband recovering,” said Mohammed’s wife.

The diarrhoea treatment centre in Al Saddaqa hospital has received around 800 cases in two months. Since the beginning of the cholera outbreak, WHO and health partners have joined forces in the fight against this deadly disease. In its effort to address reported suspected cases of cholera, WHO has supported 146 diarrhoea treatment centres throughout the country, providing treatment for severe cholera patients, in order to decrease morbidity and mortality among the affected population. Around 6261 cholera kits and 476 391 ringer lactate and IV sets were distributed — these are all essential for the treatment of cholera.

WHO also continues to work with local health authorities and Health Cluster partners in combating other communicable diseases such as diphtheria, dengue, West Nile virus, and seasonal acute respiratory infection.

With the generous support of our donors, including King Salman Humanitarian and Relief Center (KSRelief), United Arab Emirates Aid, Kuwait, World Bank, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, WHO remains committed to the people of Yemen and will continue to remain vigilant in the fight against cholera.

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