

As rainy season starts, UN health agency warns of cholera outbreak in drought-hit Somalia

5 May 2017 – Somalia is suffering from the largest cholera outbreak in the past five years and the number of people killed is expected to double by the end of June, the United Nations health agency.

The UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) reported close to 32,000 cases of cholera, including 618 deaths, since the beginning of the year.

The drought had led to a lack of clean water and the largest cholera outbreak in Somalia in the past five years, Tarik Jasarevic, spokesman for the WHO, told journalists in Geneva.

He noted that the case fatality rate of cholera is 1.9 per cent, with an emergency threshold of 1 per cent. Those numbers are expected to double at the end of next month, as the overall numbers jump due to the start this week of the rainy season.

Lack of access to clean water and hygiene, food insecurity and malnutrition caused by drought are worsening the figures.

There may be more than 50,000 cases of cholera in 2017 in Somalia, Mr. Jasarevic said.

The UN is working with partners to provide medicines and medical supplies, and train health staff. In addition, a vaccination campaign reached more than 450,000 people in March, and a [second round](#) was launched yesterday.

In addition to cholera, Somalis are faced with the threat of measles as a result of a low vaccination rate, and massive displacement and crowding as a result of the drought.

A campaign had been planned to vaccinate half-a-million children between the ages of six months and five years of age, but the required \$2.7 million have not yet been met.