

UN and partners aim to slash 90 per cent of cholera deaths by 2030

3 October 2017 – A taskforce of United Nations and international partner agencies is gearing up to launch an ambitious new strategy to combat cholera – aiming to reduce deaths by 90 per cent by 2030, the UN health agency announced today.

“This is [a disease of inequality](#) that affects the poorest and most vulnerable. It is unacceptable that nearly two decades into the 21st century, cholera continues to destroy livelihoods and cripple economies,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

With an estimated 95,000 cholera-related deaths, and another 2.9 million more people affected annually, the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC), a diverse network of more than 50 UN and international agencies, academic institutions and others, will launch tomorrow ‘Ending Cholera: [A Global Roadmap](#) to 2030, which pinpoints endemic ‘hotspots’ where predictable cholera outbreaks occur year after year.

“WHO is proud to be part of this new joint initiative to stop deaths from [cholera](#). This roadmap is the best way we have to bring this to an end,” said Mr. Tedros Adhanom.

Urgent action is needed to protect communities, prevent transmission and control outbreaks.

The ‘Global Roadmap’ aims to align resources, share best practice and strengthen partnerships between affected countries, donors and international agencies. It underscores the need for a coordinated approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks. Through its implementation, up to 20 affected countries could eliminate cholera by 2030.

“Every death from cholera is preventable with the tools available today, including use of the oral cholera vaccine and improved access to basic safe water, sanitation and hygiene as set out in the Roadmap,” underscored the WHO chief.

Although access to water and sanitation is recognized as a UN basic human right, today over two billion people worldwide still lack access to safe water and are potentially at risk of cholera. Weak health systems and low early detection capacity further contribute to the rapid spread of outbreaks.

Cholera disproportionately impacts communities already burdened by conflict, lack of infrastructure, poor health systems, and malnutrition. Protecting these communities before cholera strikes is significantly more cost-effective than continually responding to outbreaks. The introduction of the oral cholera vaccine has been a game-changer in the battle to control cholera –

bridging the gap between emergency response and longer-term control.

With two WHO-approved oral cholera vaccines now available, for just \$6 per person, individuals can be fully vaccinated for up to three years of protection.

The 'Global Roadmap' provides an effective mechanism to synchronize the efforts of countries, donors, and technical partners and underscores the need for a multi-sectoral approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks.

"We must act together. And we must act now," asserted Mr. Tedros.

AUDIO: Head of World Health Organization says that every death from cholera was preventable and that the disease takes its greatest toll on the poor and the vulnerable.

[Iraq: UN migration agency assists thousands newly displaced from west Anbar](#)

3 October 2017 – With some 8,500 people displaced over the past two weeks amid Iraq's military operations to retake Anbar province, the United Nations migration agency announced today that it is stepping up provision of life-saving assistance.

"People newly displaced from their homes often arrive dehydrated, suffering from hunger and thirst," said Dr. Hamed Amro, in a [news release](#) while assisting recently internally displaced people (IDPs) in Rutba.

While military operations to retake west Anbar were officially launched on 19 September, many families – often children, women and older people – walk long distances, some for several days, often in intense heat, to reach safe areas.

"Many require psychosocial support and need medical care. Some have chronic illness and exacerbated conditions due to long term lack of care, and others suffer from malnutrition; we have also received a few trauma cases," Dr. Amro stressed.

From early January through 2 October, [IOM](#)'s Emergency Tracking has identified a total of 54,546 displaced individuals from west Anbar, particularly from Ana, Al Ka'im and Ra'ua districts.

An IOM update shows that some 85 per cent of them transited through Kilo 18 screening site and are displaced within Anbar governorate. By district,

Falluja hosts 25,300 individuals, Ramadi another 15,100 and Heet 3,100. At the same time, 3,600 sought safety in the Baghdad governorate and 4,400 in the Erbil governorate.

Since January, 32,886 of the total 54,546 IDPs are currently registered in camps, and 21,660 in out-of-camp locations – with 21,132 in private settings and 528 in critical shelter arrangements.

In Anbar, IOM medical staff are providing immediate assistance to nearly 1,000 IDPs per week through four Mobile Medical Teams working in greatest-need locations, including Falluja city, Ameriyat al Fallujah, Heet and Garma. All are identified in cooperation with Anbar Directorate of Health, part of Iraq's Ministry of Health.

In the past two weeks, IOM has worked closely with Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement in distributing 795 non-food item kits, including a plastic cool box and rechargeable fan, to families in Al Habanyah – in addition to 500 kits previously distributed to those not living in camps in Heet. Additional distributions are scheduled for the coming week.

"Life in Al-Ka'im city, under the control of ISIL, was extremely difficult," said Ahmed, who, according to IOM, was displaced with his family of six to Haditha district, Anbar, in a perilous and long journey. "I hired smugglers to help my wife, four children, my mother and myself to escape. They drove us early morning through unpaved roads. Now we are displaced and living in an unfinished building; we have spent all our limited savings and have no money to cover our needs. The supplies we received today will help us get through this difficult time," Ahmed told IOM staff at an aid distribution.

[Dire lack of winter funding puts millions of refugees in Middle East at risk, warns UN agency](#)

3 October 2017 – Dwindling resources could severely jeopardize efforts to provide refugees and displaced persons across the Middle East with essential winter supplies such as thermal blankets and warm clothing, the United Nations refugee agency has warned.

For many it will be the seventh consecutive winter in displacement, living in tents or in makeshift settlements in near-freezing temperatures.

"We estimate that as many as four million are at extreme risk and need timely and [substantial help to properly prepare for the forthcoming winter](#) [and] of these only one in four are likely to get the assistance they need," said Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), calling for greater funding for the agency's response plan to ensure help is provided to all in desperate need.

According to estimates, there are nearly 15 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons across the region, in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

With their needs rising significantly during winter due to the harsh conditions, ensuring sufficient funding for UN agency's Regional Winter Assistance Plan for 2017/2018 (amounting to \$245 million but only 26 per cent funded) is critical, the spokesperson noted.

"Without proper help, many refugee families end up being pushed further into debt and come under increased pressure to resort to desperate steps to try to make ends meet. Women and children are especially affected," Mr. Mahecic added.

Throughout this autumn (September-November), UNHCR plans to provide cash assistance, distribute winter items and invest in preparation, insulation and repairs of shelters, as well as improve drainage in the camps.

With sufficient funding, the Regional Plan will ensure basic winter necessities – including blankets, clothing, tarpaulin and fuel – are provided to refugees and displaced persons. It will also assist those living below the poverty line with a special assistance programme.

More than 50 per cent of the assistance package is scheduled to be delivered in cash which would allow refugees and the internally displaced to address their priorities and meet urgent needs.

[UN agency alarmed by largest influx of Congolese refugees into Zambia in five years](#)

3 October 2017 – Growing violence in south-eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has driven at least 3,360 refugees into northern Zambia over the past month, the United Nations refugee agency said today, warning that the humanitarian needs of the displaced could intensify on both sides of the border as the rainy season approaches.

"This is the [largest influx](#) of Congolese refugees into Zambia in the past five years," Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) told reporters in Geneva.

The refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from the Congolese provinces of Haut-

Katanga and Tanganyika, are escaping inter-ethnic clashes, as well as fighting between Congolese security forces and militia groups.

“Those arriving in Zambia report extreme brutality, with civilians being killed, women raped, property looted and houses set alight,” Mr. Mahecic said.

Some 60 per cent of those arriving in Zambia are children. Many show signs of malnutrition. Malaria, respiratory problems, dysentery and skin infections are common among the refugees.

The Zambian Government, UNHCR and the Zambian Red Cross are distributing hot and providing psycho-social support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The humanitarian response team is delivering basic items, including tents, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, blankets, buckets, hygiene kits and soap. Temporary shelters are being erected, boreholes are being drilled for drinking water and temporary latrines are being constructed.

Because of overcrowding, UNHCR has started work on a second transit facility to receive the growing number of new arrivals. A more permanent settlement will also be developed, with a social infrastructure where new arrivals will be able to stay for longer and develop some self-sufficiency.

Since the beginning of 2017, about 5,761 Congolese have crossed the border into Zambia. In total, there are 27,338 Congolese refugees and asylum seekers in that country.

Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) is [scaling up](#) its displacement assessments and emergency activities in Tanganyika as well as the Kasai province.

Increased ethnic violence throughout these provinces has uprooted more than 1.4 million people over the past few months, bringing the total number of internally displaced nationwide to some 3.4 million.

In Tanganyika province, the UN migration agency has carried out a survey in six of the 12 displacement sites in and around the city of Kalemie to collect information on the profile, needs and intentions of the displaced, including on their return and reintegration requirements.

The survey will be conducted at the remaining sites in the following weeks. According to IOM’s database, as of September 2017, an estimated 90,000 individuals reside in these sites in precarious conditions.

“The data collected during this assessment will provide useful information to IOM and its partners on the needs and intentions of internally displaced persons,” said IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) expert, Stephanie Daviot. “It will also allow us to better target the assistance to those most vulnerable on the sites.”

In Central Kasai province, DTM has identified around 197,000 internally displaced persons and 490,000 returnees in 1,809 villages.

The DTM assessments in Central Kasai will continue over the upcoming weeks and provide an overview of the displacement situation in the entire province by the end of October.

[Cameroon: UN Secretary-General urges dialogue to resolve grievances](#)

3 October 2017 – Strongly condemning recent violence in south-west and north-west regions of Cameroon, including reported loss of life, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has urged all stakeholders to refrain from any further acts of violence and called on the authorities to investigate the incidents.

In a [statement](#) attributable to his spokesperson, the Mr. Guterres urged political leaders on both sides to appeal to their followers to refrain from any further acts of violence, and to unequivocally condemn all actions that undermine the peace, stability and unity of the country.

[He] takes note of the calls by the authorities for dialogue and encourages representatives of the Anglophone community to seize the opportunity in their quest for solutions to the community's grievances, within the framework of the Cameroonian constitution, the statement added.

The Secretary-General reiterates the support of the United Nations for such efforts, through the UN Regional Office for Central Africa ([UNOCA](#)), the statement noted.