

## Quick response critical to stem year-long cholera outbreak in South Sudan – UN agency

8 August 2017 – Rapid responses are critical to stemming a cholera outbreak that has afflicted South Sudan for more than a year, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation that has left approximately four million people displaced by conflict, according to the UN migration agency.

In a country with mass displacement and severe levels of food insecurity, the effect of the continued [cholera outbreak](#) on the health of vulnerable populations is acute, explained Dr. Beldina Gikundi, Migration Health Emergency Officer of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) in South Sudan.

Since 18 June 2016, over 18,000 cholera cases including 328 deaths have been reported in South Sudan. IOM health and water, sanitation and hygiene teams continue to respond to the outbreak through case management and preventive measures across the country.

Disease outbreaks are particularly dangerous for displaced and vulnerable populations, such as children under five years of age, who account for more than one-in-five cholera cases reported in 2017.

IOM pointed out that many locations experiencing outbreaks are in proximity to the Nile River, increasing the rainy season's impact on the cholera outbreak and threat of spreading further.

As we saw the outbreak continue, even during the dry season in 2017, we expect to see the trend persist throughout the rainy season, which leaves as much as 60 per cent of the country inaccessible by road, continued Dr. Gikundi, underscoring that sustained and flexible responses are crucial to stemming the continued transmission of the disease in this extremely challenging context.

### ***Saving lives on the ground***



Children fetch water from a repaired borehole in Bentiu town. File photo: Ashley McLaughlin / UN Migration Agency (IOM) 2017



IOM conducts WASH activities in Kapoeta, South Sudan. File photo: UN Migration Agency 2017



A woman carries clean water at the Wau protection of civilians site in South Sudan. File photo: Ashley McLaughlin / UN Migration Agency (IOM) 2017

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Since the outbreak began, IOM teams have been deployed to cholera-affected areas across the country. Teams continue to conduct hygiene promotion, core relief item distribution and borehole repairs in Bentiu and Rubkona towns, and Wau town and surrounding areas, as well as in UN protection of civilian sites across the country.

In collaboration with the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the Ministry of Health, IOM health teams are conducting oral cholera vaccination (OCV) campaigns across the country.

In an effort to reduce cholera cases in outbreak areas, IOM has recently reached more than 39,900 people in parts of Jonglei and Unity and is currently on the ground in Warrap, preparing to lead an upcoming OCV campaign targeting more than 189,000 people in Tonj East County.

Since the beginning of the 2016 outbreak, IOM has managed the USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance Rapid Response Fund (RFF) in deploying 14 missions to respond to and promote the prevention of cholera cases. Seven RRF partners are currently on the ground in three states, providing health and water and sanitation assistance to cholera-affected communities.