

CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN HISPANIOLA

Situation Report # 13

6 February 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- In Haiti, as of 5 February 2023, the Department of Epidemiology, Laboratories, and Research (DELR) have reported **28,901 suspected cholera cases in all 10 departments of the country**. Of these, **2,107 cases have been confirmed in ten departments**: 1,205 (57%) in Ouest, followed by 383 in Centre, 106 in Nord, and 104 in Artibonite.
- In Haiti, high levels of insecurity and limited access to fuel and populations continue to be major challenges in the response to the cholera outbreak.
- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health (Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population – MSPP) and partners, including in:
 - Coordination of the cholera response by strengthening the leadership of the National Unit for management of health emergencies (UNGUS) as the cholera coordination mechanism established by the MSPP.
 - Support to the Departmental Health Directorates through the deployment of 14 Assistant Epidemiologists in all 10 departments of the country, facilitating timely investigation of cholera alerts, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
 - Strategic and technical support for the implementation of the first cholera vaccination campaign, in the Ouest and Centre Departments, in which 850,067 people were vaccinated, including 3,797 inmates in the Mirebalais, Carrefour and Port au Prince civil prisons.
 - Distribution of medical and non-medical supplies for the cholera response in all departments across the country by air and land, including Cholera beds, Rapid Diagnostic Test, Ringer Lactate, laboratory reagents, aqua tabs, etc.
- In the Dominican Republic, on 1 February the Ministry of Public Health confirmed four new cholera cases, bringing the **total number of confirmed cases to 47**, eleven of which were imported from Haiti. PAHO/WHO is providing technical and logistical support to the Ministry of Health in investigating and responding to cholera alerts, the development of prevention activities through risk communication and community engagement, as well as in implementation of the ongoing vaccination campaign.
- On 26 January, the World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters with all WHO Regional offices took the unanimous decision to label the current Global Cholera situation as a **Grade 3 multi-region Public Health Emergency**, which is the highest level of institutional priority assigned a public health event, ensuring a higher investment of resources and improved coordination at all levels of the organization to effectively respond to the scale of the emergency. The decision was reached considering the current scale of the ongoing cholera outbreaks, the potential for further international spread, the high urgency due to high levels of mortality and morbidity, complexity factors and the current limited capacity to respond.

IN NUMBERS*

As of 5 February 2023

Haiti

28,901 Suspected Cases

2,107 Confirmed Cases

25,692 Hospitalized Suspected Cases

560 Deaths

2% Case Fatality Rate (suspected cases)

Dominican Republic

47 Confirmed Cases

**Total numbers for Haiti include institutional and community cases as well as cases reported in the Civil Prison of PaP. These figures exclude cases from the Dominican Republic.*

Source Haiti: Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population sitrep #108.

Source Dominican Republic: PAHO/WHO country office.

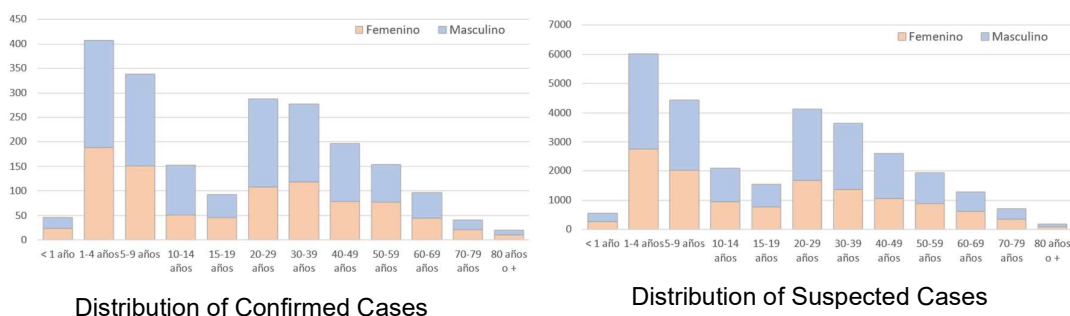
[Cholera - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization](#)

- In Haiti, as of 5 February, a total of **28,901 suspected cholera cases** were reported in all ten departments in the country, including cases reported in the Civil Prison in Port-au-Prince. Of these, **2,107 were confirmed** by the national laboratory, including **560 deaths**. To date, **ten departments have reported confirmed cases**, with the majority being reported in Ouest (1,205), followed by Centre (383), Nord (106) and Artibonite (104). Since 30 January, there has been an overall increase of 6.65% in suspected cases and a 2.48% increase in confirmed cases across the country (Figure 1).
- The case fatality rate among suspected cases is 2%.
- The Ouest Department reported a -1.89% decrease in suspected cases and a 0.84% rise in confirmed cases since 30 January 2023. The **other nine departments reported an average increase of 21.04% in suspected cases and a 4.76% rise in confirmed cases** during the same period (Figure 1).
- The most affected municipalities in the Ouest Department continue to be Port-au-Prince, Delmas, Cité Soleil, Carrefour, and Pétion-Ville, where the majority of suspected and confirmed cases are reported.
- Based on MSPP information from 5 February, 55.9% of reported suspected cases are male, and 44.1% female (Figure 2).
- Among the 2,107 confirmed cases, age groups 1-4 (19.5%) and 5-9 (16.1%) are the most affected.

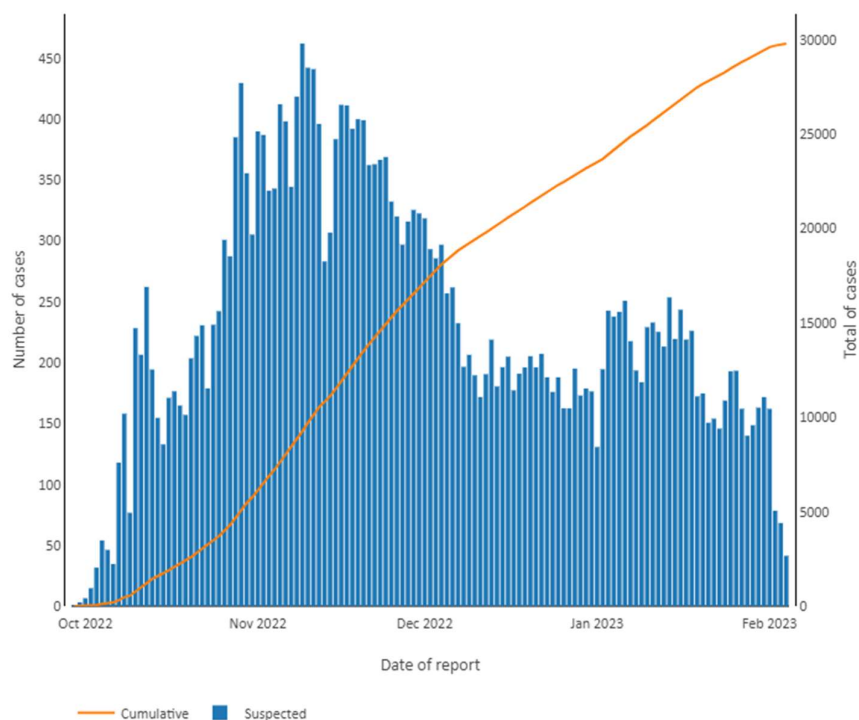
Figure 1. Summary of percent difference compared to 30 January 2023

Summary				
Department	Suspected Cases 2.5.23	% Difference 30.1.23	Confirmed Cases 2.5.23	% Difference 30.1.23
Ouest	16680	-1.89%	1205	0.84%
Artibonite	4891	5.91%	104	10.64%
Centre	3159	90.53%	383	6.69%
Nord	817	13.47%	106	3.92%
Sud	247	7.86%	40	0.00%
Nord-Est	55	41.03%	11	37.50%
Nord-Ouest	1660	13.00%	20	0.00%
Grand Anse	494	3.13%	92	0.00%
Sud-Est	254	0.00%	96	0.00%
Nippes	644	2.06%	50	0.00%
Total	28901	6.65%	2107	2.48%

Figure 2. Distribution of suspected and confirmed cases of cholera by age group and gender in Haiti as of 5 February 2023



Source: Haiti Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population

Figure 3. Daily distribution of suspected cases of cholera in Haiti as of 5 February 2023

Source: Haiti Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population



RISK ASSESSMENT AND CHALLENGES

- In Haiti, the complex humanitarian and socio-political crisis, with high levels of insecurity, fuel shortages and economic instability, continue to impact response capacity. These are some of the main drivers of the cholera epidemic as they limit access to health and basic water and sanitation services, as well as food and water supplies:
 - Although fuel distribution has restarted in the Ouest Department, availability continues to be limited in other departments, hindering basic water and sanitation services (e.g., garbage collection) and the response and distribution of life-saving medicines and supplies.
 - Lack of access to affected areas due to insecurity continue to hamper epidemiological surveillance, the installation of Oral Rehydration Points (ORP) and Cholera Treatment Centers (CTCs), the transport of patients to CTCs, and health promotion, as well as water, hygiene and sanitation activities at the community level.
- In the Dominican Republic, the four new confirmed cholera cases are all residents of the Villas Liberacion neighborhood in Santo Domingo, which is the second area in the capital city with confirmed cholera cases. The other cholera cases occurred in the la Zurza neighborhood, where no new cases have been reported for the last four weeks.
- The global cholera crisis generates a high demand for medical and non-medical supplies, including for the oral vaccine, resulting in limited cholera commodities for immediate distribution in all affected countries.



HEALTH NEEDS

In coordination with health authorities and operational partners, the following **priority needs** have been identified in Haiti to reduce morbidity and mortality. These are being addressed by PAHO/WHO as described in the next section:

- Medical and non-medical supplies for case management, including Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), Ringer Lactate solution, cholera beds and WASH supplies.
- Human resources, whose availability is limited in the country due to the security situation.
- Laboratory reagents and Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) for the investigation and confirmation of cholera cases.
- Access to safe drinking water and improved hygiene and sanitation.
- Access to enough fuel and transportation services (air and land) within Haiti for the timely and effective distribution of medical and nonmedical supplies.



PAHO/WHO RESPONSE

PAHO/WHO continues to support national health authorities and operational partners in the cholera response as follows:

Coordination and leadership

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO continues to strengthen the Cholera Response Structure for the departments agreed with the MSPP, the departmental health directorates and UNICEF, by supporting the recruitment of emergency response staff in all ten departments across the country. To date, approximately 80% of all staff needed for the Cholera Response Structure are being hired by PAHO/WHO, specifically for the following positions: Epidemiological Surveillance, investigation of alerts (Labo Moto), CTC quality monitoring, CTC sentinelles for data collection, WASH, logistics, and community intervention.
- At national level, PAHO/WHO supports the coordination of the cholera response by strengthening the leadership of the National Unit for management of health emergencies (UNGUS) as the cholera coordination mechanism established by the MSPP.
- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO leads the coordination of the Health Sector Group, which includes the participation of the United Nations agencies, INGOs as well as the donor community.
- In the Dominican Republic, PAHO/WHO is working with the Ministry of Health, Red Cross, UNICEF and other partners on the ground to coordinate and provide technical support to the cholera outbreak response in Santo Domingo as well as the investigation of alerts in the border provinces.

Epidemiological and laboratory surveillance

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO provides support to the Departmental Health Directorates through the deployment of 14 Assistant Epidemiologists in all 10 departments of the country, supporting the investigation of cholera alerts, data collection, analysis and reporting. In January 2023, a total of 702 alerts were investigated across the country, with the majority reported as follows: 196 alerts in Artibonite, 168 alerts in Centre, 142 alerts in Nord-Ouest and 78 in Nord.



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- As part of the investigation of cholera alerts at field level, PAHO/WHO continues to support 28 Labo-moto teams in all 10 departments, ensuring rapid field investigations, using RDTs, sample taking and transportation to regional or national laboratories for confirmation. Between 10 October 2022 and 26 January 2023, Labo-moto teams have supported the transportation of 3,517 samples from the departments to the National Laboratory of Public Health (LNSP) in cooperation with the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).
 - In Haiti, PAHO/WHO is providing technical and logistical support to strengthen the surveillance system at departmental level, including in the recruitment and training of 27 staff (sentinelles) to support data management at functioning CTCs to improve data collection, analysis and timely reporting in Artibonite (10), Center (6), Ouest (10) and Nord-Ouest (1) departments. In addition, PAHO/WHO continues to support the investigation of cholera alerts and response activities in prisons (see more details under WASH section below), in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and its partner Health Through Walls.
 - In Haiti, to strengthen the capacity of the National Laboratory of Public Health (LNSP) for the diagnosis of cholera, PAHO/WHO has donated 19,800 Cary-Blair (Cholera transport medium materials) and 20,000 RDTs.

Case management

- In Haiti, as of 1 February there are 106 health structures with 1,482 beds providing care to cholera patients in all 10 departments of the country, which include CTCs, hospitals, and clinics. PAHO/WHO continues to support the Departmental Health Directorates to monitor and ensure the quality of case management in CTCs. To date, 35 CTCs have been evaluated in Artibonite, Grand Anse, Centre, Sud and Nord Ouest departments, and corrective measures are being implemented in terms of water, hygiene, sanitation, infection prevention and control as well as in case management.
- PAHO/WHO is supporting the Departmental Health Directorates by contracting 1 CTC quality monitoring staff in each of the 9 departments (except Ouest) who are supporting the assessments of CTCs as well as monitoring improvement actions.
- PAHO/WHO continues to support departmental health authorities in monitoring the number of active CTCs and bed occupancy rates in all departments, to ensure an effective distribution of cases among all available health facilities.

Water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH)

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO is supporting the Departmental Health Directorates with ongoing WASH evaluations of health facilities and CTCs providing care to cholera patients. To date, 28 CTCs WASH evaluations have been completed in 8 departments, identifying gaps related to insufficient WASH materials such as aqua tabs and chlorine, and lack of adequate hygiene and sanitation services.
- In addition, PAHO/WHO is supporting the WASH evaluation in prisons where suspected cases have been reported. In the last 10 days, two WASH evaluations have been completed in the civil prison of Hinche and the prison of Mirebalais in the Center Department, which include an assessment of the availability and quality of water, as well as hygiene and sanitation conditions, and are accompanied by the distribution of WASH materials as well as disinfection and decontamination activities.



Risk communications and community engagement

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO continues to support cholera prevention activities through risk communication and community engagement interventions, such as the activities that took place in Gros Mornes, Artibonite Department during the local celebrations from 1-3 of February, that included radio messages promoting preventative behavior, community sensibilization sessions on food hygiene, and preventive WASH interventions in public spaces including the installation of temporary hand-washing services and distribution of aqua tabs and ORS.
- In terms of community level interventions, PAHO supported the training and deployment of 250 Community Health Workers (Agent de Santé Communautaire Polyvalent) in Nippes Department on cholera prevention, mental health first aid, basic WASH interventions and community-based surveillance that includes identification of suspected cases and deaths, as well as referral of cases to CTCs, and delivery of ORS and aqua tabs.

Vaccination

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO provided strategic, technical and operational guidance for the implementation of the first oral cholera vaccination campaign that took place in December 2022 in the Ouest and Centre Departments. In total, 850,067 people were vaccinated in the two departments, including 3,797 inmates in three civil prisons: Mirebalais, Carrefour and Port au Prince. Vaccination coverage reached 76% of the total target in both departments.
- In the Dominican Republic, the cholera vaccination campaign that began on 25 January has already reached 2,040 people in the targeted areas of Villa Liberación, El Almirante and La Zurza in the capital city of Santo Domingo. PAHO/WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health in developing the vaccination communication campaign, vaccination guidelines, monitoring tools, distribution of a cold chain kit in target areas and distribution of safe water kits along with the vaccines. In addition, the Ministry of Health will roll out vaccination campaigns in the border provinces of Perdernales, Independencia, Elías Piña y Dajabón, targeting vulnerable populations at risk, including health personnel from hospitals and primary health care centers, prisons, military and civil personnel and staff working in water aqueducts.

Logistics

- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO continues to distribute medical and non-medical supplies for the cholera response in all departments across the country. In the last 15 days, PAHO/WHO has distributed 14,728 liters of Ringer Lactate, 5,600 catheters, 60,000 aquatabs by road to Centre, Nord Ouest and Artibonite for case management and WASH activities. In addition, PAHO/WHO, in collaboration with the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is supporting the distribution of cholera supplies by air to hard-to-reach locations such as the island of La Gonâve.
- In Haiti, PAHO/WHO continues to support the MSPP to facilitate the distribution of critical fuel to ensure the functioning of essential health services, particularly the Hospital La Paix in Port au Prince over the last 15 days.