

Yellow fever kills 32 in Sudan's Darfur: ministry

November 1 2012

Mosquito-born yellow fever has killed 32 people in Sudan's conflict-plagued Darfur region this month, the health ministry said in a statement obtained by AFP on Wednesday.

"According to laboratory results, people are affected by yellow fever. The total number affected in the two states is 84, 32 of whom died," the statement said, referring to outbreaks in Central and South Darfur.

The October 30 statement said a [vaccination campaign](#) is being prepared.

In the meantime, the ministry has sent [blood supplies](#) and medicines to the area, and has a plan to fight mosquitos, it said.

The UN's [World Health Organisation](#) said the ministry notified it of the outbreak in the districts of Azoom, Kass, Mershing, Nertiti, Nyala, Wadi Salih and Zalingei.

"The federal Ministry of Health, WHO and other health partners are working on the ground to ensure timely containment of the outbreak," a statement said.

Samples were sent on Wednesday to a lab in Dakar, Senegal to reconfirm the diagnosis, a first step towards beginning the vaccination programme possibly by early December, WHO country representative Anshu Banerjee told AFP.

"In Darfur there hasn't been any immunisation campaign before," he said.

Data expected in about a week should indicate whether the number of cases from the current outbreak is rising or falling.

"The people that have been most affected are nomads," and the outbreak could be linked to this year's heavy rains and flooding in Darfur, as more mosquitos breed, Banerjee said.

There is no specific treatment for the viral illness found in tropical regions of Africa but it can be contained through the use of [bed nets](#), [insect repellents](#) and long clothing.

"Vaccination is the single most important measure for preventing yellow fever," WHO said.

A 2005 outbreak of the disease in Sudan's South Kordofan state caused 163 deaths out of 604 cases over about five months.

In January 2011, 35 people died from [yellow fever](#) in [Ivory Coast](#), WHO said.

Ethnic African Darfur rebels rose against the Arab-dominated Khartoum government in 2003. The United Nations estimates at least 300,000 people died, but the government puts the toll at 10,000.

An estimated 1.7 million Darfur people are still living in camps for the displaced, the UN says.

Violence has eased since the early days of the nine-year-old war but various conflicts persist: rebel-government clashes, inter-Arab and tribal fighting, as well as carjackings and other banditry.

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