

Cholera outbreak spreads in South Sudan

June 3 2014

An outbreak of cholera has spread outside of war-torn South Sudan's capital Juba for the first time since the deadly disease appeared last month, health officials said Tuesday.

The outbreak has become an additional source of concern in the country, already at risk of famine triggered by a nearly six-month-old civil war between President Salva Kiir and rebels loyal to former vice president Riek Machar.

"We are seeing that the cases are spreading outside of Juba," Abdinasir Abubakar of the World Health Organisation told reporters. "We need to be prepared to be ready to respond to any potential outbreak outside Juba."

The outbreak has already claimed 27 lives with 1,124 infected, South Sudan's Health Minister Riek Gai Kok added, saying that new cases had been confirmed south and southwest of Juba, as well as in Jonglei and Upper Nile states to the north—the scene of heavy fighting in recent months.

The minister said there was a decline in reports of new cases, although the WHO's Abubakar cautioned that this "does not mean that the [outbreak](#) is contained."

Heavy rains are sweeping the impoverished country, hampering aid efforts and potentially exacerbating the spread of the disease.

Cholera is transmitted through drinking water or eating food contaminated with faeces or dirty hands. After a short incubation period of two to five days, the disease causes severe diarrhoea, draining the body of its water. The sudden and dramatic loss of fluid is often fatal.

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Citation: Cholera outbreak spreads in South Sudan (2014, June 3) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-06-cholera-outbreak-south-sudan.html>

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