

Sudan facing measles outbreak with 2,500 cases nationwide: UN

June 22 2015

Sudan is facing a huge nationwide outbreak of measles, with at least 2,500 confirmed cases so far this year, mostly children, and 38 deaths due to the disease, the United Nations said Monday.

The number of cases reported up to June in 17 of Sudan's 18 states is more than four times the figure for the whole of last year.

"The outbreak this year is huge and we more than 2,500 confirmed cases of [measles](#)" since January, UN interim humanitarian coordinator for Sudan Geert Cappalaere told AFP.

"Measles is something we see in Sudan every year, but we see yearly not more than 500 or 600 cases over the whole year," he said.

"The second point of alarm for us is that the outbreak is countrywide. For the moment 17 out of 18 states have confirmed cases of measles," Cappalaere said.

The government, with support from the UN [children's](#) fund UNICEF and other aid agencies, has launched a campaign to vaccinate 7.9 million children under 15 against the disease.

Some 72 percent of the 2,511 [confirmed cases](#) of the disease are children in that age group.

The campaign started in the first week of June, targeting parts of eastern

Sudan and Khartoum state.

The second stage of the campaign, which started Monday, will target the western Darfur region, which is home to 2.5 million people who have been displaced by fighting between the government and rebels since 2003.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that causes a rash and fever, and can lead to complications ranging from brain damage to hearing loss and blindness. In rare [cases](#), it can result in death.

Cappalaere said this year's outbreak was likely due to the fact that not enough children had been vaccinated in previous inoculation drives.

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