

Yellow fever death toll rises to at least 250 in Angola

March 15 2016

A yellow fever epidemic in Angola has killed at least 250 people since the end of December and continues to spread, stretching limited resources, doctors and officials said Tuesday.

The head of the Luanda pediatrics hospital, Mateus Campos, said 27 children died there on Monday alone, with 900 suspected cases turning up each day.

"We don't have the human resources to cope," Campos added.

Health ministry spokeswoman Adelaide de Carvalho told AFP that the ministry registered 76 suspect cases and 10 deaths in three days alone this month, but gave no overall toll.

A week ago the World Health Organisation put the death toll at 250 but some doctors believe the situation may be far worse.

There is no specific treatment for yellow fever, a viral hemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes and found in tropical regions of Africa and Latin America's Amazon region.

Authorities launched a mass vaccination campaign in February and the government urged residents to sterilise stagnant water before drinking it.

Luanda remains the worst-hit area, with nine of every 10 deaths registered in the city over the last days.

Critics such as surgeon Maurilio Luyela have blasted authorities for failing to upgrade public [health](#) facilities or pay doctors good wages.

"Doctors who graduate from university don't join the public health sector because there isn't enough money to pay them," he told journalists.

Yellow fever vaccinations are routinely recommended for travellers to Angola, though the country had not previously seen a significant outbreak since 1986.

World Health Organization figures show there are an estimated 130,000 cases of [yellow fever](#) reported yearly, causing 44,000 deaths worldwide each year, with 90 percent occurring in Africa.

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