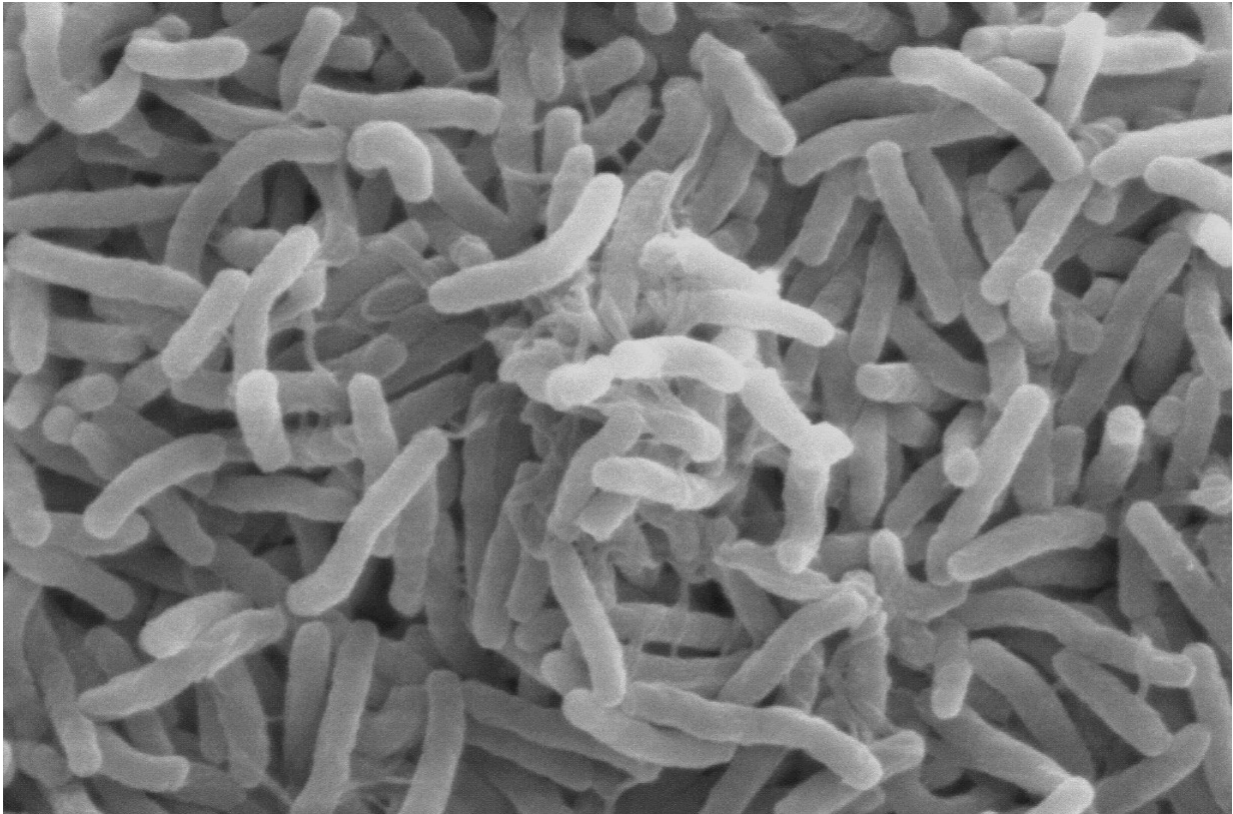


# Zambia fighting back on cholera

January 14 2018

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Scanning electron microscope image of *Vibrio cholerae*. Credit: Wikipedia

Zambia said Saturday it would open its international school and some retail centres in the capital after making sufficient progress in its fight to stem a cholera outbreak.

Lusaka has borne the brunt of an epidemic which began last September

with data released on Saturday showing 3,148 cases nationwide, 72 of them fatal.

The government has sought to stem the spread with a package of sometimes draconian measures including a ban on large public gatherings and the nationwide postponing of the start of the school year, as well as the introduction of a curfew in the slum district of Kanyama, seen as the focal point of the outbreak.

"Lusaka's international school will reopen on January 16. They have been inspected and meet sanitary conditions," said Health Minister Chitalu Chifuy, adding the situation regarding government-run schools would be revisited on January 23, rather than a week later as initially announced, before setting a date on their reopening.

Minister Vincent Mwale said retail stores in some commercial districts in the capital would reopen Sunday—although not in Kanyama.

Kanyama residents clashed with police Friday, demanding informal street retailing be allowed to resume.

Authorities had banned some street markets in an effort to reduce the volume of food and drink being sold in unsanitary open-air locations, which are particularly vulnerable to the spread of [cholera](#).

Demonstrators claimed at Friday's protest, which resulted in dozens of arrests, that street trading is the only source of income for many people living in Kanyama.

## **'Corruption source of cholera'**

Cholera is a water-borne diarrhoeal disease that can kill within hours if left untreated, but is easily cured with oral rehydration, intravenous

fluids and antibiotics.

Clean water and sanitation are critical to controlling transmission.

President Edgar Lungu has blamed water from shallow wells, unsanitary conditions in residential and public areas and contaminated food.

On December 30, he ordered the military to assist efforts to stem the spread of the disease.

Opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema meanwhile said some of the blame for the epidemic lay with Lungu's regime.

"Corruption is a source of cholera ..... if the \$42 million that they spent on firefighters was used to improve sanitary conditions in Kanyama there could not have been cholera.

"The PF has been behind this creation of (an) unsanitary environment because of corruption," Hichilema charged.

"We will fight cholera together because of our people but we will continue to talk about the corruption in government."

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Citation: Zambia fighting back on cholera (2018, January 14) retrieved 14 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-zambia-cholera.html>

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