

Madagascar says plague outbreak 'under control'

September 20 2018

Madagascar's seasonal outbreak of plague, which has so far killed two people, is "under control", Health Minister Yoel Rantomalala said Thursday.

"We have recorded from August 1 to September 17, 13 suspected cases of [plague](#), three of which are confirmed and caused two deaths," Rantomalala said.

The first fatality was recorded in Fiadanana, north of the capital Antananarivo, while the second was reported in Ambalavao in the Indian Ocean island's interior.

"For the moment, the situation is under control, we are on the right track," he told reporters.

Last year more than 200 people were killed before bubonic and pneumonic plague epidemics were brought under control in November.

The [disease](#) spread to urban centres including the capital last year, taking the authorities by surprise.

"We learnt the lessons of last year's [epidemic](#)," the minister added. "Last year in September we had already had 54 confirmed cases".

"For now, there is no need to talk of an epidemic or to restrict public meetings," said Charlotte Ndiaye, local representative of the World

Health Organization.

General elections take place on November 7 with a second round scheduled for December 19.

Madagascar has suffered bubonic plague outbreaks almost every year since 1980. The disease tends to make a comeback each hot rainy season, from September to April.

On average, 300-600 infections are recorded annually among a population approaching 25 million people, according to UN estimates.

The germ *Yersinia pestis* can be transmitted to humans from infected rats via fleas. It can also be transmitted human to human through cough droplets from a person with a pneumonic form of the disease.

Pneumonic plague can prove fatal in 24 to 72 hours while the bubonic form is less dangerous.

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