

1st cholera cases confirmed in Mozambique's cyclone-hit city

March 27 2019, by Nqobile Ntshangase



A young girl walks on the dirty water in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)

The first cases of cholera have been confirmed in the cyclone-ravaged city of Beira, Mozambican authorities announced on Wednesday, raising

the stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in increasingly squalid conditions.

The five cholera cases were confirmed in Munhava, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the hard-hit port city, the national director of medical assistance, Ussene Isse, told reporters. The city of some 500,000 people is still struggling to provide clean water and sanitation after Cyclone Idai roared in on March 14.

"You know, cholera is an epidemic situation. When you have one case, you expect to have more cases in the community," Isse said.

Cholera is a major concern for cyclone survivors now living in crowded camps, schools, churches and any land exposed by the still-draining flood waters. The disease is spread by contaminated food and water, causes acute diarrhea and can kill within hours if not treated with oral rehydration solution or intravenous fluids in severe cases.

The World Health Organization has warned of a "second disaster" if waterborne diseases like cholera spread in the devastated region. On Tuesday it said 900,000 oral cholera vaccines were expected to arrive later this week.

The cyclone has killed more than 460 people in Mozambique and left 1.8 million people in need of urgent help. President Filipe Nyusi last week estimated that 1,000 people had been killed. The toll could be higher as floodwaters drain away and reveal more bodies, some emergency responders have said. The actual number of dead may never be known.



A woman carrying a baby on her back jumps as she tries to avoid stepping on the dirty water in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)

Health workers were opening clinics across Beira, the center of relief operations for the region.

Some people in the city have resorted to drinking stagnant water by the side of the road, increasing the chances of diarrhea, the medical charity Doctors Without Borders said. Other people are drinking from contaminated wells.

The aid group said it has seen hundreds of cases of acute watery diarrhea in the past few days.



A man sleeps under a tree on the beach in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)

"The scale of extreme damage will likely lead to a dramatic increase of waterborne diseases, skin infections, respiratory tract infections and malaria in the coming days and weeks," said Gert Verdonck, the group's emergency coordinator in Beira.

Hurried efforts continued to restore running water to Beira. The United Nations children's agency said parts of the city's water supply system were working again, with "water running in 60 percent of the pipes." The government also was operating water trucks.

Relief operations continued to explore ways to deliver aid to the city that remains largely reachable only by air and sea. More challenging was reaching rural communities, some of them still without contact with the outside world.



Children play on a tree that fell when Cyclone Idai struck in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March, 27, 2019. Mozambiquan authorities say the first cases of cholera have been confirmed in the cyclone ravaged city of Beira, raising the stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in increasingly squalid conditions.(AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)

More humanitarian actors arrived as the United Nations urges the international community to fund a \$282 million emergency appeal for the next three months.

The U.N. refugee agency announced that its first aid flight had landed in the capital, Maputo, with plans to immediately transport the tents, mosquito nets and other items to Beira.

Two other flights are planned for Zimbabwe and Malawi this week.

The death toll in Mozambique is now at least 468, with 259 dead in Zimbabwe and at least 56 dead in Malawi.



A child fetches dirty water from a channel in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March, 27, 2019. Mozambiquan authorities say the first cases of cholera have been confirmed in the cyclone ravaged city of Beira, raising the stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in increasingly squalid conditions.(AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)



A health worker inspects a baby's feet before entering a cholera treatment center in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March, 27, 2019. Mozambican authorities say the first cases of cholera have been confirmed in the cyclone ravaged city of Beira, raising the stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in increasingly squalid conditions. (AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)



A young man play soccer on the beach in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



School books hang on a clothes line to dry after getting wet from the cyclone, in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



Health workers spray peoples' feet before entering a cholera treatment center in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March, 27, 2019. Mozambiquan authorities say the first cases of cholera have been confirmed in the cyclone ravaged city of Beira, raising the stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in increasingly squalid conditions. (AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)



A cargo plane takes off after offloading aid at the airport in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A young boy wearing a mask with his friend pushes a wheel attached to a stick in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A young boy wearing a mask pushes a wheel in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A young girl hangs clothes on a clothes line under dirty water in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



Young men play soccer at the beach in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



Young boys pushes their wheels in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



Workers restores a damaged roof in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A man restores a damaged roof in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A young girl stands against the wall in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A man tries to avoid stepping in the dirty water as he passes a damaged house in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



A man constructs a roof as he rebuilds his house in Beira, Mozambique, Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Cyclone-ravaged Mozambique faces a "second disaster" from cholera and other diseases, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday, while relief operations pressed into rural areas where an unknown number of people remain without aid more than 10 days after the storm. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)



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