

Syria receives cholera vaccines ahead of inoculation drive

November 30 2022, by Albert Aji

Syria has received two million doses of cholera vaccines, the first to reach the country during a months-long outbreak, the country's health ministry said Wednesday.

The war-torn country [has been suffering from a cholera outbreak](#) since September and has struggled to contain it due to its devastated water and health infrastructure. Syria's Health Ministry has documented 1,556 cases and 49 deaths since then.

Both the country's [health ministry](#) and the United Nations believe the source of the outbreak is linked to people drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River and using [contaminated water](#) to irrigate crops, resulting in food contamination.

Syria's Health Ministry said the vaccines were from the U.N. children's agency UNICEF and international organization Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. It announced a two-week vaccine drive starting in December in areas most affected by the illness in the Aleppo countryside, Deir Ezzor, Hasakah and Raqqa.

The announcement from Damascus comes at a time where cholera vaccine production has not met surging demand, as the bacterial infection surges globally due to conflict, poverty, and [climate change](#).

The U.N. World Health Organization in October announced the temporary suspension of a two-dose cholera vaccination strategy because

of this, and officials have since administered single doses to benefit more people in the short-term.

According to the World Health Organization, a cholera infection is caused by consuming food or water infected with the *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria. While most cases are mild to moderate, not treating the illness could lead to death.

Syria's [cholera outbreak](#) has crossed frontlines and borders into rebel-held northwestern Syria, and into neighboring Lebanon and Iraq—all places with crippled water infrastructure, economic turmoil, and large refugee populations. Lebanon in October announced its [first cholera case in nearly 30 years](#).

As of Wednesday, Lebanon had recorded 4,455 cases and 20 deaths from the disease. Since launching an inoculation drive earlier this month, Lebanon has given more than 400,000 doses of the vaccine.

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