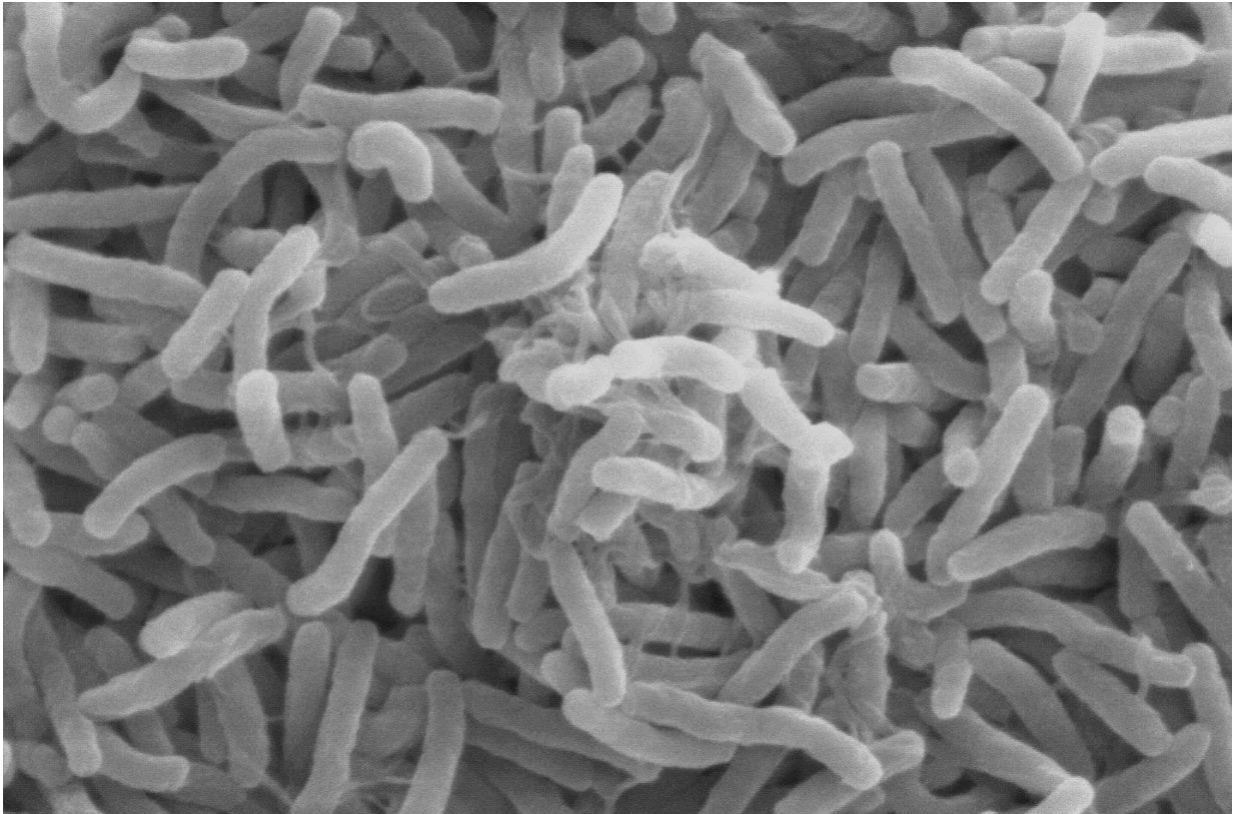


Zimbabwe starts cholera vaccination drive

January 29 2024



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

Zimbabwe launched a vaccination campaign against cholera on Monday, to rein in a worsening outbreak of the disease that the government said has killed more than 400 people.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said the southern African

country received a first batch of almost 900,000 vaccines last week.

On Monday, government officials started administering the first doses in Kuwadzana, a suburb of Harare, the capital and one of the hardest hit areas.

"In recent weeks we have witnessed a surge in the numbers of cholera cases attributable in part to the onset of the rain and flooding and increased population movement during the [festive season](#)," Health Minister Douglas Mombeshora said in a statement.

Cholera is contracted from bacteria generally transmitted through contaminated food or water.

Outbreaks occur regularly in Zimbabwean cities where supplies of drinking water and [sanitation facilities](#) are erratic and infrastructure has collapsed due to years of neglect.

Zimbabwe has been battling the [current outbreak](#) since February last year.

It has reported more than 20,000 suspected cases and 400 deaths, of which 71 have been confirmed by laboratory tests.

In November, Harare declared a state of emergency with some officials drawing comparisons with 2008, when cholera claimed at least 4,000 lives in the country and at least 100,000 people fell ill.

The current [vaccination campaign](#) is targeting 2.3 million people, with more doses expected to arrive next week, the WHO said.

"People are dying," Kuwadzana resident Patience Kuzhazha, 40, told AFP upon receiving a dose.

"I took it upon myself to get vaccinated so that I can safely encourage others to do the same."

The WHO has previously expressed concern over the growing number of cholera cases around the world in recent years, with Africa bearing the brunt.

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