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DISEASE ALERT

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**First alert: March 18, 2025 | Cholera Outbreak in Gambella region,
Ethiopia**

Sub-Locations Affected

Akobo District (Gambella region), Ethiopia

Event Description

On February 11, 2025, a cholera outbreak of 12 cases with two deaths was detected in Akobo District, Gambella Region, which borders South Sudan. The outbreak has since spread to eight districts and four refugee camps. On March 14, 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) escalated response efforts to contain a rapidly spreading cholera outbreak in the region, with 1,500 cholera cases reported, including 31 fatalities.



Map of sub location affected

Epidemiological information

Ethiopia (Gambella Region)

- On February 11, 2025, an outbreak of cholera was initially detected in Akobo district, involving 12 cases with two deaths, and has spread at least to other eight districts and four refugee camps. The spread is exacerbated by conflict in South Sudan, led to mass displacement, poor sanitation, and a lack of access to healthcare.
- On March 8, 2025, Gambella region reported a total of 1,320 cases and 29 deaths, with an average Case Fatality Rate of 2.2%. The most affected districts are Wantawo and Akobo. Cholera cases have also been reported in four refugee camps.
- As of March 14, 2025, more than 1,500 cholera cases, including 31 fatalities, were reported in Gambella region.

Regional Cholera Epidemic

- Previous cholera outbreaks in Ethiopia (2017 and 2019) resulted in thousands of cases, mainly in the Amhara and Gambella region.
- In 2023, there were 4,000 cholera-related deaths, a 71% increase from the year before, making it a serious public health concern across Africa.

Response Measures

- The WHO has deployed a surge team of experts to support outbreak response, focusing on coordination, surveillance, case management, infection prevention, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and community engagement with regional health officials.
- The WHO provided \$100,000 in cholera treatment supplies, deployed Rapid Response Teams, and trained 85 healthcare workers, improving case management in Gambella and supported over 1 million cholera vaccines to manage the Gambella outbreak.
- WHO launched community-based interventions, including household visits, rehydration points, hygiene promotion, water treatment distribution, and cholera awareness campaigns in multiple local languages.
- The Non-Government Organization (NGO) Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is providing emergency care, clean water, and disease awareness campaigns, while urging urgent support for health facilities and vaccination campaigns.
- Cross-border collaboration efforts are initiated between South Sudan, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), the Gambella Regional Health Bureau, and the WHO Country Office to review cholera response progress.

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