

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHOLERA IN YEMEN

Yemen is in the grip of a fast-spreading cholera outbreak. With more than 53,000 suspected cases and close to 500 associated deaths from acute watery diarrhoea reported across the country so far, Yemenis are facing yet another major public health crisis amidst war and devastated social services.



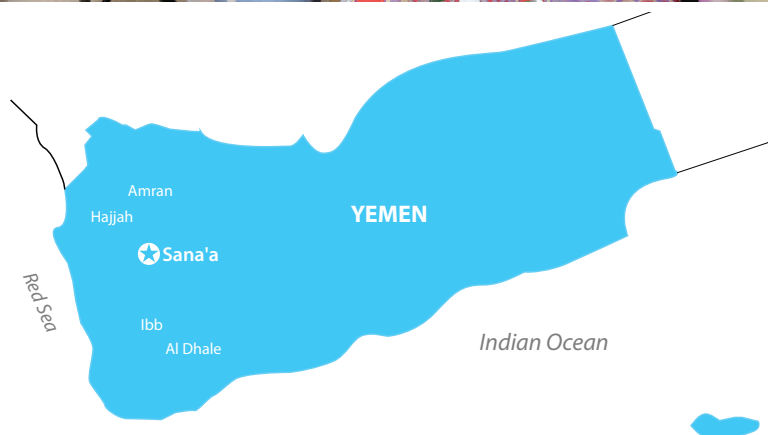
**The cholera outbreak** was first declared by the Ministry of Public Health in October 2016. By the end of May 2017, it spread to **19 governorates**. The most affected areas are Sana'a City, Sana'a Province, Hajja Province, Ibb Province, Al Dhale, and Amran.

#### Oct 2016–April 2017

25,872 suspected cases and 120 deaths were recorded in 7 months. Children were hard hit: 32% of the suspected cases were children below 5 years.


#### April–May 2017

Over 53,000 suspected cases and 478 deaths, with 373 lab confirmed cholera cases as of 28 May 2017. An estimated 2,000 of the suspected cases are children.



THE SOURCE OF THE CURRENT CHOLERA OUTBREAK IS LINKED TO CONTAMINATED WATER SUPPLY, COLLAPSING OR POOR SANITATION SYSTEMS AND DETERIORATING LIVELIHOODS OF FAMILIES THAT CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY FOR BASIC NEEDS.

CHOLERA IS ENDEMIC IN YEMEN, AND IS A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH RISK IN A COUNTRY DEVASTATED BY TWO YEARS OF BRUTAL WAR AND COLLAPSED SOCIAL SERVICES.

 **14.5 million** people including children, **don't have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation** (UNOCHA 2017).

More than **20 water and sanitation utilities in major cities** and towns have stopped working because of fuel shortages, unpaid staff salaries, airstrike damage and restrictions on imports of spare parts.



**14.8 MILLION PEOPLE ARE CUT OFF FROM HEALTHCARE—**

ONLY 45 PER CENT OF HEALTH FACILITIES ARE FUNCTIONAL IN YEMEN (UNOCHA 2017).



The situation is aggravated by **severe food insecurity and malnutrition**, which increase people's susceptibility to infection and the risk of death.



**14 million people** in Yemen are food insecure, including 7 million severely food insecure, 3.3 million are acutely malnourished and 462,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

## UNICEF IN ACTION

### Health

- UNICEF airlifted 29 metric tonnes of medical supplies to treat 8,000 cases of acute water diarrhoea.
- Provided diarrhoea disease kits and oral rehydration salts to treat patients.
- Delivered over 14 tonnes of supplies to health facilities in Sana'a, covering 2,000 moderate and severe cases.
- Helped train doctors and health workers on case management.

### Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- Supported disinfection of drinking water both at source and in households.
- Provided hygiene kits containing soaps and washing powder and jerry cans for household water storage where needed.
- Provided treatment chemicals with safety tool

kits for taking further safety measures during the waste collection.

- Supported quick maintenance of waste disposal desludging trucks to increase the scale of cleaning campaigns.
- Increased the reach of intervention to 2 million people in Sana'a only and an additional 0.5 to 1 million in other hotspot locations.

### Communication for Development

- Developed awareness-raising messaging for clean-up campaigns and liquid waste desludging.
- Supported communication campaigns in the affected provinces through direct interaction with communities.
- Helped launch a TV and radio communication campaign, as well messages on social media platforms, including WhatsApp groups.