



*Patients visit International Medical Corps' temporary cholera treatment center in Mahaday, Jowhar.*

Somalia has been facing a continuation of cholera outbreaks from 2023, with 474 cases reported in the second week of January 2024. The majority of cases have been in Hirshabelle state, which is still recovering from the El Niño-related flooding that occurred at the end of 2023. The floods have destroyed, contaminated and damaged water sources and latrines in the region, forcing communities—particularly the most vulnerable—to use unsafe water or practice open defecation.

The current outbreak is a continuation from 2023 when, according to the UN, more than 18,300 cases were reported, including more than 10,000 children below 5 years. The districts of Afmadow, Baardheere, Baidoa, Bardaale, Belet Wayne, Bulo Burto, Dhobley, Dollow, Jamaame, Jowhar, Kismayo and Luuq are particularly affected.

Throughout January, International Medical Corps has seen a surge in acute watery diarrhea/cholera cases in our health facilities as well as in the surrounding catchment villages. Together with the Somalia Ministry of Health and World Health Organization, International Medical Corps has collected 135 samples for testing, of which 81 were positive for cholera. So far this month, 195 patients have been admitted at the Cholera Treatment Center (CTC) in Jowhar while 108 have been admitted at Mahaday Health Center, which is operated by International Medical Corps and where we have established a temporary CTC with a capacity of 50 beds. As the disease is spreading fast, it is likely that our CTC will become overwhelmed in the coming weeks.

## International Medical Corps' Response

International Medical Corps is working in Hirshabelle to provide humanitarian assistance. To date, we have:

- provided water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to 3,779 people in the region, including routine household hygiene promotion and environmental health activities;
- scaled up our support to the Jowhar Regional Hospital CTC, providing five sanitation stations to improve environmental hygiene for staff, patients and visitors;
- provided emergency water trucking to 300 households in the airport camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Daifa village, with 75 trucks delivering 10,000 liters of safe drinking water;
- begun construction of two elevated water tanks, and rehabilitation of boreholes, in Mahaday and Dabeyley to improve safe water access in these communities;
- increased services to fixed and mobile health facilities in the affected villages, IDP sites and communities to manage cases and ensure early referral to area CTCs; and
- distributed 1,000 hygiene kits to families in the most vulnerable El Niño flood-affected IDP camps and riverine villages in Jowhar district.

Urgent support and additional funds are needed to expand the response to prevent the further spread of cholera and contain the current outbreak in Hirshabelle state. It is essential that water sources are treated and rehabilitated; that communities receive hygiene kits, including dignity products for women and girls; and that further awareness-raising campaigns are held in the affected districts.

### FAST FACTS

- During the second week of January, 474 new suspected cases of cholera, and nine associated deaths, were reported from 27 flood-affected districts in Somalia.
- A national Cholera Task Force has been activated following this latest outbreak, developing a six-month plan to scale up cholera response activities.

### OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps has scaled up support to the Jowhar Regional Hospital Cholera Treatment Center, providing sanitation stations to improve environmental hygiene for staff, patients and visitors.
- In an effort to contain the outbreak, we have established a temporary cholera treatment center (CTC) in Mahaday with a capacity of 50 beds.
- In January 2024, International Medical Corps managed 108 suspected cases of cholera at the temporary CTC.