



A cholera treatment isolation tent set up by International Medical Corps to treat suspected cholera patients in Dougui refugee camp.

On July 25, the Ministry of Public Health and Disease Prevention officially announced an outbreak of cholera in the Dougui refugee camp, located in the Chockoyan health district of Ouaddai province in eastern Chad. The announcement came after PCR tests confirmed that samples from the camp were positive for cholera. Since July 13, 128 cases of suspected cholera, with symptoms that include acute diarrhea with vomiting, have been reported at the Dougui Health Center, with 44 patients currently receiving treatment at the isolation tents set up by International Medical Corps.

So far five deaths have occurred in Dougui camp, including four patients receiving treatment at the isolation facility, and one death in the community. Two people from surrounding villages are suspected to have died because of cholera. 63 new cases have been recorded at the health facility in Dougui in the past 72 hours. Since the last report, which said that cases had been reported only from Zone 3, as of July 31 suspected cases are being reported from almost all zones of the Dougui camp, which currently hosts 19,992 individuals (6,288 households).

Following the declaration of the outbreak, Chad's Minister of Public Health made a public announcement urging communities to adopt preventive measures, including avoiding contact without proper protection with bodies of those who might have died of cholera; limiting social gatherings and events such as wedding, funerals or other large gatherings; strict observation of safe hygiene practices, including regular handwashing and consumption of safe drinking water; washing vegetables and fruits properly before consumption; and reporting suspected cases to the nearest health facilities.

Several key actions have been undertaken at the central level to coordinate the response, including organization of crisis meetings with relevant stakeholders, deployment of a multisectoral response team to Ouaddai province and the appointment of an incident manager. At the regional level, the government has established a provincial coordination mechanism for incident management. This includes the activation of the Provincial Rapid Response Team and a joint Provincial Health Delegation consisting of health authorities, WHO and UNICEF. They have also established sub-coordination committee at the Chockoyan district level.

Case investigation and notification to the Provincial Health Delegation in Abéché will be conducted and support will be provided for sample transportation to the Public Health Laboratory in Ndjamená for testing. The Ministry plans to increase the supply of

FAST FACTS

- On July 25 the Ministry of Health announced an outbreak of cholera in Chad.
- Since July 13, 128 suspected cases of cholera have been reported at the International Medical Corps-supported health center at Dougui refugee camp in eastern Chad. Five patients have died in or near Dougui camp, and two deaths in surrounding villages are suspected as a result of cholera. Two samples sent to Ndjamená for confirmatory PCR testing were positive.
- There has been an active cholera outbreak in Sudan since May that is likely behind the spread to Chad due to the daily influx of Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees.

OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has a history of operating in Ouaddai province in eastern Chad since 2004.
- Our current activities include providing emergency lifesaving primary healthcare; maternal and child health services; mental health and psychosocial support; food security and livelihoods; and nutrition services.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps has established a 40-bed isolation area and so far provided treatment to 128 patients experiencing acute diarrhea with vomiting. 44 patients currently are receiving treatment; 79 were treated and discharged.
- We have collected samples from patients and sent them for cholera testing, and are conducting contact tracing at the community level. Community health workers are engaged in awareness-raising and active case surveillance.

essential medications and of infection prevention and control (IPC) and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) consumables to Chockoyan health district; intensify risk communication and community engagement efforts; and strengthen local coordination mechanisms at the district level.

The risk of a larger outbreak remains high, due to a lack of access to safe drinking water for camp residents and poor sanitation conditions, including open defecation and overflowing latrines. The onset of the rainy season and the ongoing relocation of refugees directly from Sudan, where a severe cholera outbreak is occurring, could contribute to the further spread of cholera in the Dougui camp.

International Medical Corps Response

As of July 31, the International Medical Corps-supported Dougui Health Center had received 128 cases of suspected cholera. To respond to the surge in cases, we have established a three-tent isolation area with a capacity of 40 beds to manage complicated cases. Currently 44 patients are receiving treatment at the isolation site while 79 patients were treated and discharged.

In coordination with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and UN partners, a new site has been identified for establishment of a Cholera Treatment Center (CTC) with a 50-bed capacity, which will operate in accordance with standardized admission criteria based on the three-phase patient admission protocol. The site, which is approximately two kilometers from Dougui Health Center, will consist of 10 tents for treatment of patients and one kitchen tent. International Medical Corps has so far received seven tents and is in the process of setting up the CTC.



A joint team comprising International Medical Corps staff, an Ouaddai province health official, and WHO and UNICEF staff inspect the site in Dougui camp for the Cholera Treatment Center.

International Medical Corps also received six cholera peripheral module kits and IPC/WASH consumables from the MoPH, WHO and UNICEF. The six cholera kits can enable healthcare staff to provide treatment for up to 600 patients.

International Medical Corps is progressively scaling up staffing by deploying medical doctors, nurses, hygienists, IPC/WASH officers, community health workers (CHWs) and other support staff.

To mitigate risk of community transmission, as part of the response efforts we have trained CHWs in chlorine solution preparation and household decontamination. International Medical Corps conducted a briefing for 15 health personnel at the Dougui Health Center on the rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the preparation of chlorine solutions. Additionally, International Medical Corps supplied chlorine solutions to CHWs to support the decontamination of 36 households and trained four hygienists in proper household decontamination procedures.

We are co-leading the national Cholera Task Force in collaboration with the MoPH and Health Cluster, and co-leading the cholera response sub-coordination in the Chockoyan health district. We continue to work closely with other actors, including the health district, the provincial health delegation, WHO, UNICEF and UNHCR.

We also have facilitated the collection and transport of samples for PCR tests, in coordination with health authorities.

The situation is anticipated to worsen, and critical gaps persist in the availability of cholera beds and PPE. Additional tents are required to establish the CTC at the newly identified site.