

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Haiti and the Dominican Republic Increase in cholera cases

Information bulletin n° 2
Glide n° [EP-2010-000210-HTI](#)
13 June 2011

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. An Emergency Appeal was launched on 23 December 2010. Up to date, the Appeal coverage is approximately 89 per cent and may be revised in line with the results of the analysis currently taking place in order to cope with the evolving situation.

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During the previous weeks, the Haitian and the Dominican surveillance systems registered an increase in the number of cholera cases. This coincided with the beginning of heavy rains causing floods and landslides in various geographical areas.

On 7 June 2011, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/ World Health Organization (WHO) published an Epidemiological Alert stating that the Haitian Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) system reported that as of the epidemiological week (EW) no. 19 there was an increase in the number of hospitalized patients in Port-au-Prince and the Centre department.

The Dominican Republic Ministry of Public Health reports that since the beginning of the outbreak up to EW 20 of 2011 there were 1,329 confirmed cases (191 in 2010 and 1,138 in 2011), including 27 deaths.

The Distrito Nacional and the provinces of Santiago, San Pedro de Macorís, La Romana and the border provinces of Independencia and Elías Piña also registered an increase in cases with respect to the previous weeks.

The Haitian Red Cross and the Dominican Red Cross have continued activities started in October 2010, supported by Partner National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' secretariat (IFRC). The IFRC teams in Haiti and in Santo Domingo continue monitoring the situation in coordination with both National Societies to provide additional support if needed.

The Situation

In the Dominican Republic, the National surveillance system registered an increase of the number of suspected cholera cases, which coincided with rains that caused floods in various areas around the country.



In the community of Gualey (Santo Domingo) Dominican Red Cross volunteers continue with epidemic control talks started in October 2010. DRC.

The PAHO epidemiological alert of 7 June reports that by the EW 20 of 2011, the disease has outstretched to 27 of the 31 provinces. The Health authorities reported 1,329 confirmed cholera cases --191 in 2010 and 1,138 in 2011-- and 27 deaths. PAHO reports an increase of cases in the Distrito Nacional and the provinces of Santiago, San Pedro de Macoris, La Romana, Independencia and Elías Piña.

On 9 June 2011, the National Centre for Emergency Operations (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia- COE) initialized its contingency plan against hurricanes and confirmed alerts for the following at-risk departments:

RED	YELLOW	GREEN
Monte Plata	San Cristobal	Maria Trinidad Sanchez
Santo Domingo	Azua	Monseñor Nouel
Distrito Nacional	San Juan de la Maguana	Bahoruco
	Independencia	La Vega
	Sanchez Ramirez	Dajabon
	Santiago de los Caballeros	San Jose de Ocoa
	San Pedro de Macoris	Santiago Rodriguez
	Duarte	Barahona
	Monte Cristi	
Valverde		

Rains have affected 4,010 households and 1,659 people have been sought shelter in public spaces.

In Haiti, the latest figures released from the MSPP as of 31 May 2011 (based on figures collected daily from all CTCs and CTUs by the Ministry's Health Operations Centre) record 324,299 cumulative cases of cholera, 172,482 hospitalizations and 5,342 deaths since the beginning of the outbreak in October 2010.

Similarly, the alert and response system of MSPP and PAHO has found that the Cholera Treatment Centers (CTC) and the patient transportation units found in Port-au-Prince are working at full capacity. In accordance with this system, there is an increase in registered cases in the Ouest, Gran-Anse, Sud and Sud-Est departments.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement components continue to report an increased number of hotspots of cholera particularly in the West, and Grande Anse provinces, with more cases being received and treated in the various cholera treatment centres (CTCs) and cholera treatment units (CTUs) which they support.

Heavy rains that began on 2 June flooded streets around Port-au-Prince, West, South, Artibonite, and Nippes department. The Artibonite River has over flown its banks resulting in the flooding of Grande Saline.

As of 3 June 2011, the last official report from the Health Cluster reported that bed capacity in the metropolitan zone of Port-au-Prince available for treating cholera patients stood at 1,976 beds, of which 200 were available.

In response to the case increase, the humanitarian community of international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Movement have made efforts to scale up their activities. The bed capacity of CTCs and CTUs in key affected areas has been increased particularly in Port-au-Prince to meet the needs.

The recent upsurge of cholera cases in Haiti has been stabilizing, but still requires close monitoring due to recent floods that can jeopardize the response.



Photo: Cholera patients receiving treatment from the CTC Carrefour-Feuille June 2011. Source: G.Tauscher/IFRC.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The following actions of the Movement are part of the scaling up of operations in response to the May cholera resurgence. The normal cholera-related activities of the IFRC continue to operate and information on these can be found in the regular Operations Updates on the IFRC website.

In the Dominican Republic, the National Society keeps the 24 hours monitoring system countrywide to assess the situation through their national communications network from the branches to the DRC's headquarters.

The Dominican Red Cross is consolidating its strategic partnerships with public institutions such as the National Authority for Water and Sanitation (Instituto Nacional de Aguas Potables y Alcantarillados – NAPA), the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) and local authorities for supporting population with safe water supply, disinfection, prevention and control of cholera through awareness raising campaigns. On 7 June 2011, the DRC and IFRC held a coordination meeting with the MSP's **General Direction for Education and Health Promotion (DIGPRES)** and UNICEF to revise currently used Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to focus more on control of the disease as the number of cases increases.

With the support of **American Red Cross, the Belgium Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Spanish Red Cross and the IFRC**, the DRC has continued its hygiene promotion and cholera prevention campaign started in October 2010 to control and prevent the spread of the disease. The campaign has provided training to more than 29,065 people in communities countrywide. Especial attention has been given to the following provinces: Distrito Nacional, San Pedro Macoris, Santiago, San Cristobal and Elias Piñas.

The Spanish Red Cross has contributed to the donation of oral rehydration salts (ORS) to the Ministry of Health, trained 12 provincial disinfection teams and 300 volunteers in cholera prevention, as well as developing, printing and distribution of IEC material. The Spanish Red Cross will support the Dominican in the activities planned.

During the previous week, the DRC has focused its efforts to support the Elias Piña province as the incidence of cases continues to increase in this province. As requested by local authorities, the DRC has agreed to deploy one previously prepositioned water treatment plant for the Sabana Blanca community in the municipality el Comendador. The water plant will provide 30,000 litres of drinking water per day for at least 2,000 people. The DRC has also deployed volunteers to the area for carrying out hygiene promotion activities using the epidemic control for volunteers (ECV) methodology –including PHAST methodology components– and to support sanitation services. Furthermore, in coordination with Partners in Health, the DRC has built an oral rehydration centre to provide services to La Mesita community. The centre has received 109 patients.

The actions of the Dominican Red Cross have had media coverage in newspapers and television, and interviews were held in channel Salud TV de Aster Comunicaciones.

The IFRC team in the country has been strengthened to respond to the complex emergency. In coordination with the regional representation for the Latin Caribbean and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the zone emergency health coordinator continues in the Dominican Republic. In addition, a reporting person and a regional intervention team member specialized in health have been deployed to ensure adequate support to the National Society. They will assist National Society to revise and expand its current plan of action as pertinent.

In Haiti, the **Haitian Red Cross (HRC)**, with the support of the IFRC cholera department carried out a training of 50 community leaders (representatives, teachers and priests) and 50 volunteers on cholera awareness and how to conduct household disinfections. This began on 7 June and will take place in Fonds Verettes where there were 30 cases with seven deaths over the past two weeks in an area of 49,000 inhabitants. This training aims to decrease the incidence of cholera in this area.

In the Port-au-Prince area, the **American Red Cross (AmCross)** has deployed 22 health promoters to Carrefour to conduct house-to-house hygiene promotion and distribution of soap and aqua tabs, in collaboration with the Haitian Red Cross, the IFRC and the French Red Cross.

The **British Red Cross**-led CTU in La Piste/JMV camp, home to 40,000 people, also witnessed a sudden rise in cholera cases as the rainy season intensified. The CTU is run jointly with Partners in Health. As of the start of June, 67 patients were in admission, which is about double the average caseload of March-April 2011. The capacity of the unit has been restored to 120 beds. During the recent outbreak in Carrefour, the British Red Cross offered up spare bed capacity to MSF who were encountering very high patient numbers in the CTU. During the month of May 1,220 patients visited the CTU, 730 received ORS but did not require admission, and 490 cases were admitted. The British Red Cross also continues to maintain its cholera operations in the South department.

Following its approval on 31 May, the **Canadian Red Cross (CRC)** set up a CTC in Carrefour-Feuille on the 2 June. This CTC is jointly operated with the IFRC, the HRC, the MSPP and Médecins du Monde (MdM). Originally a site clean up was conducted and a human resource plan was drawn up consisting of 45 former HRC and CRC qualified staff, 36 former MdM local staff and 6 MSPP staff. On 31 May the Canadian Red Cross team increased to three people with the arrival of a technician. The team plans to remain in Haiti to support the CTC for one month. UNOPS also provided the CTC with waste management services for one week. Over the week it received a steady increase in cholera cases. Between 2 and 8 June the CTC received 164 cases. Many of these cases required simple treatment and observation before being discharged; however, 22 of these were severe and were admitted to a bed. From the information currently available, other CRC operations in Léogane reported 120 confirmed patients, with 17 further cases in Jacmel.

The French Red Cross (FRC) also continues to support a CTC in Tabarre (IMIS) with a bed capacity at 80 beds as of 9 June. Between 1 and 7 June this CTC received 81 patients. Between the 2 and 9 June the CTC in Bicentenaire operated with a capacity of 80 beds and received 264 cases of cholera not all of whom required admission.

In response to the resurgence of cholera, the FRC reinforced its activities supporting CTCs and CTUs. Two of the 8 CTUs in Port-au-Prince continued to be supervised and receive regular provisions from the FRC which also re-launched disinfection teams by their water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH) teams. On the request of NGO partners, the medical team of the FRC launched training sessions on cholera awareness and treatment. On 7 June, the FRC supported a young person's association opening a project in a CTU in Dufrenay. A tap-tap (local vehicle) and ambulance of the FRC also provided transport of cholera cases to nearby CTCs. Furthermore, the team which gave training on the management of dead bodies in Port-au-Prince was re-launched and between 2 and 3 June properly collected 77 bodies (not exclusively related to cholera deaths).

In Petit-Goave, the CTUs are running 24 hours a day and disinfections are being systematically conducted in affected households by agents of the local health structures which the FRC is supporting.

The German Red Cross (GRC) made available information on its staff and materials in Arcahaie to lend support where needed. Two former staff of the GRC were subsequently selected to reinforce the IFRC cholera programme.

Between 1 and 7 June the **Norwegian Red Cross** team responded also to outbreaks in Grande Anse. Activities were centred on the city centre of Jérémie where six volunteers in two to three teams visited schools and orphanages and poorer areas of the city. The teams directly reached 2,694 people and handed out 1,700 ORS, 3,600 bars of soap and over 53,000 aqua tabs as part of their awareness raising and community-focused cholera treatment efforts.

The Spanish Red Cross (SpRC) also scaled up its work on cholera prevention in Port-au-Prince within neighbourhoods and the 22 camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in which it is working. During May, 32 cholera cases and 1 death were reported in these 22 camps. Through the same month, the SpRC gave training to committees within IDP camps on water management, sanitation and treatment of cholera patients as part of its wider strategy to enhance community participation in combating cholera. A total of 8,800 sachets of ORS were distributed to the committees on hygiene promotion, and a further 19

disinfection kits were provided to the sanitation committee responsible for disinfections following the identification of a cholera patient. This was in addition to 110,000 aqua tabs and 1,532 bars of soap distributed across IDP camps. Furthermore, 140 posters relating to cholera treatment and prevention were placed in the 22 IDP camps supported by the SpRC. In neighbourhoods a further 2,100 posters were placed in water kiosks, churches, schools and pharmacies.

The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) cholera programme received a clear indication from the MSPP that they would like to run the CTU in Port-â-Piment around mid-June. This possibility is being monitored closely especially given there are 29 patients currently at the CTU. The JRCS is also supporting the establishment of a new CTU in the hospital, which will comprise a diarrhoea observation unit also to be managed in the future by the MSPP.

Since the start of the May cholera resurgence the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** helped prison authorities treat 36 cases of cholera in nine places of detention in Haiti where one death was reported. With the support of the ICRC, Haitian Red Cross volunteers in Cité Soleil and Martissant transferred to the hospital around 100 people suffering from cholera. The ICRC continues to distribute water-purification tablets to the inhabitants of Cité Soleil. With the support of the ICRC, Haitian Red Cross volunteers in Cité Soleil and Martissant continue to implement a prevention campaign against the epidemic.

The **IFRC** cholera department remains ready to deliver cholera-related materials and technical assistance as requested by Partner National Societies (PNS) and, in times of urgent need, the wider humanitarian community. Specifically in response to the May outbreak the department has:

- With the IFRC logistics department delivered 34 cholera beds to the MSF CTC in Carrefour to increase their inpatient capacities.
- With the IFRC water and sanitation department supported the supply of a water truck to the CTU of the British Red Cross in La Piste/JMV on 9 June.
- Made available support to fund the CTC in Carrefour-Feuille for 2 months, and assisted the CTC set up by preparing a standard package of medicines and equipment delivered on 1 June. These items included 1 cholera kit, 300 ringer lactate, an infusion set to treat 300 patients and 15 cholera beds.
- Continued to fund the Haitian Red Cross ambulance service (currently comprising 4 ambulances) transferring cases to CTCs for treatment.
- Supported the HRC with a two-day refresher course for 40 volunteers on disinfections and cholera prevention outreach.
- Spoke on behalf of the Movement's response during a press conference which followed on from a meeting with the Mayor in Carrefour on 6 June attended by MSPP, WHO, FRC, UNOPS, and the Haitian Water Authority (DINEPA).
- Reinforced the IFRC water and sanitation team with an additional sanitation team (pick up truck, sprayers) to conduct disinfections in response to the increase of cholera cases recorded in camps.

Furthermore, a 10-day mass sensitization activity began on 9 June by the coordinated action of the IFRC, the HRC, DINEPA, UNOPS, MSPP and AmCross. The HRC contributed 40 additional community health mobilization volunteers to Carrefour, bolstered by a further 100 from AmCross. Together they targeted three principal zones of Bois Biote, Mariami and Marotiere distributing aqua tabs, flyers and posters, conducting household disinfections and carrying out mass messaging. Given the concentration of the urban population in these areas, it was possible to reach approximately 488,000 beneficiaries. As part of this activity the IFRC cholera department provided UNOPS with 30,000 bars of soap, 200,000 ORS and 600,000 aqua tabs. The department also distributed 6 disinfection kits to the FRC, and working together with the HRC trained 60 camp disinfection teams, 40 of which have to date been deployed with the remained ready for deployment next week.

The **IFRC** health department continues to conduct focus groups addressing belief and perceptions regarding cholera as well as essential prevention messages. This has included mass sensitization sessions mainly targeting camps and schools. Psychosocial first aid was given to patients in three CTUs and CTCs in La Piste, Canapé Vert and Petit-Goâve. Furthermore in June, the psycho-social volunteers will be deployed in two additional CTCs located in Carrefour and Carrefour-Feuille.

The IFRC communications department has been especially active in raising awareness of cholera during this recent peak amongst the beneficiary community. Information regarding the rise in cases of cholera and the reopening of a CTC in Port-au-Prince was press released on 2 June. Supporting photography and footage from the CTC was shared with all Movement communications colleagues, in addition to a fact sheet including key messages, questions and answers, and an overview of Red Cross Red Crescent cholera related activities. Cholera information is also included in external communications regarding the recent rains and landslides.

The focus of Radyo Kwa Wouj also turned back to cholera, with shows on 25 May and 1 and 8 June all discussing the rise in cases and the link between the rainy season and an increase in diseases. Each show answered questions live on air from listeners.

Cholera SMS were issued to Léogane, Petit Goave, Nippes and Jacmel areas providing information on prevention and locations of Canadian Red Cross oral rehydration points. More than 660,000 SMS were issued, reaching over 132,000 people. The final SMS encouraged people to call *733 for more information, generating 1,237 calls on 8 June alone. This represents a 600 per cent increase on daily call rates for earlier that week.

A West and South-wide SMS campaign was also re-started on 31 May. This campaign will currently run until 10 June. Messages reminding people to call *733, informing them of the symptoms of cholera, what to do if they think they have cholera and how to protect themselves. As of 10 June an estimated 3.5 million SMS were delivered to an estimated 456,000 people.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

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