Cholera Hits All Yemeni Provinces, Killing More than 1,600

Geneva, July 7 (RHC)-- The United Nations warns that the cholera outbreak has spread to all 21 provinces across Yemen, saying the disease has claimed more than 1,600 lives the war-torn country since late April.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric made the announcement, adding that 270,000 people were also suspected to have contracted the disease in the country. Dujarric further noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners had received medical supplies and equipment to treat 10,000 people in the Yemeni cities of Aden and Hodaydah.

"We are now facing the worst cholera outbreak in the world," the WHO said in a statement last week, adding that children under the age of 15 made up 41 percent of those cases and people older than 60 accounted for 33 percent of the deaths.

Cholera, which causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, is transmitted through contaminated drinking water and could prove fatal in up to 15 percent of untreated cases.

The ongoing Saudi campaign against Yemen has destroyed the country's health sector, making it difficult to deal with the epidemic. Over two years of war and conflict have significantly reduced Yemen's public healthcare capabilities. All operating hospitals and clinics are now over-burdened by the epidemic for lack of medicine, equipment and staff.

Nearly 3.3 million Yemeni people, including 2.1 million children, are currently suffering from acute malnutrition. The Saudi-led war against Yemen has caused more patients to die due to medicine shortages.

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