

# *Cholera Death Toll Rises to 28 in Flood-hit Mozambique*

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Maputo, February 17 (RHC)-- Cholera epidemic has claimed 28 lives in Mozambique following heavy rains and floods that lashed out the southeast African country. According to Mozambican officials, the death toll has climbed to 28 from 19 deaths reported last week. The number of infections has increased to 2,400, up from last week's 1,702 cases.

"We are particularly concerned by the (situation in the) city of Tete, where we are seeing an upsurge in new cases with an average of 70 admissions per day," said Benigna Matsinhe, an official with Mozambique's Health Ministry. Tete lies in northern Mozambique bordering Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Mozambique regularly suffers outbreaks of cholera and diarrhea during summer, between October and March, when the country faces heavy rains and floods. The spread of cholera intensified after widespread flooding broke out in Mozambique between December and January, killing 158 people and affecting 170,000. The African country's deadliest floods in 2000 claimed 800 lives.

Mozambique's central province of Zambezia was the worst affected region in the country. Some 650 schools were destroyed during the floods in the province. Authorities have estimated that rebuilding its classrooms needs about USD 1.5 million (1.3 million euros).

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