



## Health and Pandemic: Human Security Monthly Report – MARCH 2023

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECOWARN System has been monitoring ongoing and new disease outbreak in the sub-region of ECOWAS for the reporting period going up to March and following are the trends: since our last report on 26 February, a total of 447 suspected cases of **Yellow Fever** including 15 confirmed cases (Igm positive) and 03 probable deaths (CFR 0.6%) has been reported by 11 ECOWAS countries. Since the beginning of the year, a total of 1,473 suspected cases, including 26 confirmed cases and 16 probable deaths (CFR of 1.1%) has been reported from 11 Member States.

An ongoing **Meningitis outbreak** in Republic of Niger has been assessed as ( high risk) of spread at national level, yet the reactive vaccination campaigns with the trivalent ACW meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine have been implemented to curve the worrying trend of infection which from 1 November 2022 to 27 January 2023, has affected a total of 559 cases of meningitis (of which 111 are laboratory confirmed), including 18 deaths. The epicenter Zinder Region, southeast of Niger, sharing an international border with Jigawa State in Nigeria where a NmC outbreak is also ongoing.

Whilst in Nigeria, reports of CDC revealed that 12 states across 32 Local Government Areas recorded a total of 922 suspected cases of **Cholera**, including 32 deaths, so far in 2023. A trend according to the analysts, tends to get worse during raining season. This factor coping with difficulty in accessing some communities due to security concerns, open defecation in affected communities, lack of potable drinking water in some rural areas and urban slums, and poor hygiene practices in most cholera-affected communities make it challenging when it comes to effectiveness of the response.

At the same time the country's northern state of Kano became epicenter of battle against **Diphtheria outbreak** with the latest situation report from the Nigeria Center for Disease



Control and Prevention (NCDC) revealing the northern state of Kano has the highest burden of confirmed cases at 211, with 38 deaths. An outbreak of **acute kidney injury** in children aged between few months and 7 years has so far registered a total of 84 confirmed cases (51 boys and 33 girls), 72 confirmed deaths (CFR of 85.7%) and 12 cured cases from June 2022 to 8 March 2023.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

### ECOWAS Region

#### Yellow fever

Epidemiological situation of Yellow Fever In week 8, a probable case of yellow fever was reported in the health district of Nioro (Kaolack region in central Senegal). The seroneutralization is positive and the final classification is in progress. The case concerns a 6-year-old boy, fully vaccinated against yellow fever by the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). No other cases have been detected by the investigations and the local response has been completed. However, the alert mechanism has been maintained (reinforcement of surveillance, routine vaccination, communication, etc.).

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All ECOWAS Member States are high risk and endemic countries in Africa. In 2022, 5 of them (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) reported outbreaks of Yellow Fever. Vaccination remains the primary strategy of prevention and control of yellow fever. According to WHO and UNICEF estimates, routine child immunisation coverage against yellow fever remains insufficient. For example, in 2020 and 2021, 8 ECOWAS states have not reached the 80% threshold required to confer global immunity to the population. This



supports the existence of an underlying susceptible population at risk of yellow fever and at risk of continued transmission.

## NIGER

### Meningitis

From 1 November 2022 to 27 January 2023, a total of 559 cases of meningitis (of which 111 are laboratory confirmed), including 18 deaths (overall CFR 3.2%), have been reported from Zinder Region, southeast of Niger, compared to the 231 cases reported during 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022. The majority of laboratory-confirmed cases (104/111; 93.7%) are due to *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C (NmC). Reactive vaccination campaigns with the trivalent ACW meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine have been implemented.

Zinder region shares an international border with Jigawa State in Nigeria where a NmC outbreak is also ongoing, confirming the risk of international spread. Moreover, the simultaneous occurrence of other epidemics, insecurity and population displacement, all in the context of a protracted humanitarian crisis, are likely to contribute to the spread of the outbreak in other countries of the West African subregion.

WHO assesses the risk posed by the current meningitis outbreak in Niger as high at the national level, moderate at the regional level, and low at the global level. The WHO said Wednesday, warning that the outbreak could spread to other countries.

Being located in the African meningitis belt, Niger has been affected by several meningitis epidemics resulting in 20 789 cases and 1369 deaths (CFR 6.6%) reported since 2015. However, the ongoing outbreak shows both an increased number of cases and an increased growth rate compared to the previous seasons.

The organization said it assessed the risk from the outbreak as "high" at the national level in Niger, and "moderate" at the West African regional level, but said that the risk of it spreading beyond the region was "low".



## NIGERIA

### Cholera

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control has announced a total of 922 suspected cases of cholera, including 32 deaths, so far in 2023. The NCDC disclosed this in its latest Cholera Situation weekly epidemiological report for week nine posted on its official website on Tuesday. The report revealed that 12 states across 32 Local Government Areas have reported the suspected cases, with a case fatality ratio of 3.5 per cent.

Cholera is an acute diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria. People can get sick when they swallow food or water contaminated with cholera bacteria. The infection is often mild or without symptoms, but can sometimes be severe and life-threatening. According to the World Health Organisation, at least 24 countries continue to report cholera cases. Regarding historical transmission patterns and seasonality, large parts of the world are currently in low or interepidemic transmission periods, therefore this number could increase in the months to come.

In Nigeria, cholera is an endemic and seasonal disease, occurring annually mostly during the rainy season and more often in areas with poor sanitation. The 12 states reporting cases in the country are Abia, Bayelsa, Benue, Cross River, Ebonyi, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Sokoto, and Zamfara.

The report read in part, “Of the suspected cases since the beginning of the year, the age group >45 years is the most affected age group for male and female. Of all suspected cases, 54 per cent are males and 46 per cent are females. Six states – Cross River (647 cases), Ebonyi (97 cases), Abia (72 cases), Niger (38 cases), and Zamfara (28 cases) account for 96% of all cumulative cases. Fifteen LGAs across nine states Ebonyi (4), Cross River (3), Ondo (2), Bayelsa (1), Abia (1), Katsina (1), Sokoto (1) Niger (1) and Zamfara (1), reported more than five cases each this year.



The NCDC reported that there is difficulty in accessing some communities due to security concerns, open defecation in affected communities, lack of potable drinking water in some rural areas and urban slums, and poor hygiene practices in most cholera-affected communities. Other challenges are inadequate health facility infrastructure and cholera commodities for the management of patients, inadequately trained personnel in states for case management, and poor and inconsistent reporting from states.

### **Diphtheria**

Nigerian health authorities have confirmed 216 diphtheria cases with 40 deaths in four states of the country since December 2022. In the latest situation report on diphtheria reaching Xinhua news agency on Tuesday, the Nigeria Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) said the northern state of Kano has the highest burden of confirmed cases at 211, with 38 deaths.

The country's southwest state of Lagos reported two confirmed cases with two deaths, the northeast state of Yobe with two confirmed cases and no death, and the southwest state of Osun with one confirmed case and no death, said the report. Of the 216 confirmed cases, 184 were aged two to 14 years, said the report, adding the agency was supporting the response activities in the affected states, including vaccination programmes, Xinhua news agency reported.

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection caused by the *Corynebacterium* species of bacteria that affects a person's nose, throat, and sometimes skin. The symptoms of diphtheria include fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough, red eyes, and swelling of the neck. In severe cases, a thick gray or white patch appears on the tonsils and/or at the back of the throat, which is associated with difficulty breathing.



## GAMBIA

### Acute Kidney Injury

On 26 July 2023, health authorities in The Gambia reported an outbreak of acute kidney injury in children aged between few months and 7 years. The first case was recorded on 27 June 2022 and the last case on 8 March 2023. A total of 84 confirmed cases (51 boys and 33 girls), 72 confirmed deaths (CFR of 85.7%) and 12 cured cases has been reported since the beginning of this event. Western 1, Western 2 and Upper River health regions were the most affected with 44%, 28.6%, and 16.7% respectively. However, only two cases have been reported since the completion of the drug recall exercise in October 2022.

### RECOMMENDATION

- ✚ Member State should have vaccination and immunization as primary strategy and priority in the fight against Yellow fever, Cholera other endemic and seasonal diseases in the region;
- ✚ WAHO and Member State should come up with an integrated strategy and action plan and implementation road map for improvement of the health system, especially WASH Policy in the selected communities, the most vulnerable in each country;
- ✚ Improve security in the communities for accessibility for health workers to be able to delivery service.
- ✚ WAHO and Member State have to review existing Policy on Drug production and importation to the region in order to maximize the quality control and prevent fake drug entering the region.