

SOLACE^{GLOBAL}

LATEST

TRAVEL ADVISORY





TRAVEL ADVISORY • 13 APRIL 2018

Substantial Increase in Cholera Deaths in Malawi

KEY POINTS

- Malawi continues to record new cholera cases, with most cases reported in its capital, Lilongwe.
- At least 30 people have been killed since the outbreak began in Autumn 2017; 18 deaths have occurred in Lilongwe.
- Districts heavily hit by the disease are Karonga, Lilongwe, Salima and Dedza.



SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

Health: Cholera cases have continued to rise in Malawi since the outbreak began in autumn 2017, with the onset of the rainy season. Lilongwe, the country's capital, has been most notably impacted. During this period, at least 30 people have died nationwide; 18 of these cases were reported in the capital city. Malawian health authorities have recorded that 893 infections countrywide on 11 April 2018, an increase from 844 in March 2018. Of these cases, a total of 352 have occurred in the capital. The most heavily impacted districts are Karonga, Lilongwe, Salima, and Dedza, while Rumphi, Dowa, Nkhatabay, Likoma, Nsanje, and Mulanje have also been hit by the outbreak.



TRAVEL ADVISORY • 13 APRIL 2018

The outbreak has been linked to contaminated drinking water from shallow, contaminated sources and to poor food hygiene. Parts of the capital city have experienced flooding and heavy rains continue nationwide; this is likely to result in further contamination of drinking water supplies.

In March 2018, Malawian officials argued that they were winning the war against the disease, claiming that no new cases had been registered. However, the figures released during April indicate that this is not the case.

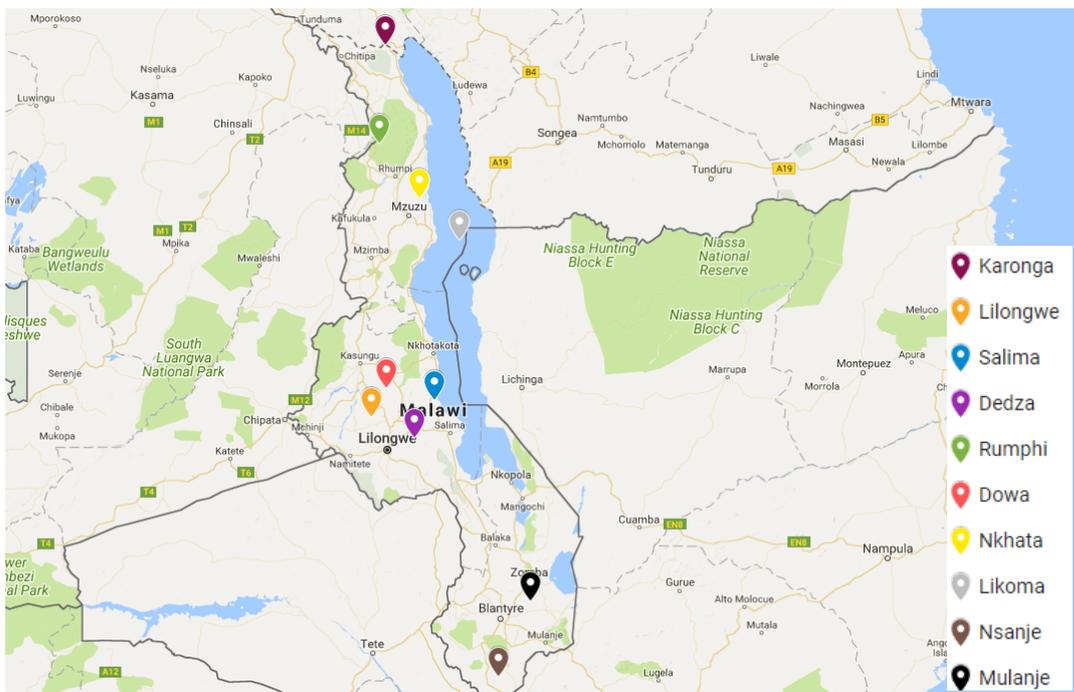
What is Cholera?

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease. It can kill within hours unless it is sufficiently treated. While figures are not entirely clear, it has been estimated that between 1.3 million and 4.0 million cases of cholera occur every year, with between 21,000 to 143,000 deaths attributed to the disease. Cholera occurs in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and more recently, in parts of the Caribbean. The US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) reports that global cases of the disease have risen steadily since 2005. Most of those infected will have few or zero symptoms; these cases can generally be treated with a rehydration solution. However, in severe cases, rapid treatment with intravenous fluids and antibiotics is required. It can take between 12 hours and five days for an individual to show symptoms after ingesting contaminated food or water. Even for those with mild or no symptoms, the infectious bacteria can live in an individual’s faeces for up to ten days, posing a significant difficulty to any quarantine system.

What is Being Done?

Authorities have announced that there is a ban on the sale of cooked food in market places in an attempt to control the disease. UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) and other aid groups are working with the government to provide medical supplies and equipment to treat those infected. The government has also received a grant to implement a water and sanitation project in cholera hit areas of Karonga and Rumphi districts.

Some in Malawi have criticised the government’s response for focussing on symptoms rather than causes. In the longer term, Malawi, and other locations where cholera is present, need to ensure the provision of potable water and sufficient sanitation to prevent outbreaks occurring. Further health and hygiene education will be required for the Malawian population to ensure that this outbreak is overcome and does not return.





TRAVEL ADVISORY • 13 APRIL 2018

SECURITY ADVICE

MODERATE HEALTH RISK



What should you do?

These five basic steps are effective measures for cholera prevention.

1. **Drink and use safe water.** In impacted countries, only bottled water with unbroken seals should be considered safe to drink. This water should also be used to brush teeth, wash, and prepare food, and to make ice. Running water should be boiled and left at complete boil for at least a minute, with a chlorine tablet added. Avoid drinking beverages with ice in restaurants and eating salads.
2. **Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.** Washing hands with soap and safe water should be done regularly and thoroughly. Most importantly it should be done before eating or preparing foods, before feeding children, after using the toilet, or caring for others who have used the toilet. Travellers should consider keeping antibacterial hand gel on their person at all times.
3. **Deal with bodily waste appropriately.** Use appropriate sanitation systems to dispose of faeces, such as chemical toilets. Remember to keep toilets and surfaces which could be contaminated clean with an antibacterial solution.
4. **Cook food well.** Fruits and vegetables should be boiled, cooked, or peeled, these processes remove the risk of surface bacteria which transmits the cholera infection. Be sure to cook seafood all the way through.
5. **Clean well and safely.** Wash yourself or others in your care at least 30 metres away from drinking water sources. The same should be remembered when cleaning items which are potentially infected such as diapers/nappies.

Travellers to Malawi should remember to employ the above to prevent or limit the potential for infection from cholera. It should also be noted that there are vaccination options available for the disease. All travellers should seek medical advice at least six weeks before travelling to understand if any vaccinations should be taken for travel to Malawi.

The primary security threat to travellers to Malawi remains petty crime. A variety of criminal activity is evident throughout the country, from petty thievery to violent carjackings and burglaries. Travellers may wish to consider employing a pre-arranged locally-vetted driver and vehicle prior to their arrival in country, as local transport infrastructure is weak. For all travel to Malawi, Solace Global would advise that clients seek pre-travel security advice and employ travel-tracking technology with an intelligence feed in order to stay up to date on recent developments.



Solace Global remains available to provide the full range of Travel Risk Management services to clients. Solace Global is also able to provide comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, and evacuation services. For further details please contact +44 (0)1202 795 801 or email sg@solaceglobal.com