

Report on the current Cholera outbreak in Kalemie city, Tanganyika Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo



Residents of Kalemie, in Kisebwe Central Market and its surrounding rushing early in the morning to collect water from Lukuga River, here is where at the same they dump all the rubbish from the city and from the main Market.

Statistics

On Friday May 2nd, 2025 second the General Hospital in Kalemie had 2037 cases of Cholera, with a total of at least 200 cases per day during the week when the situation became complicated. In total by the same day 37 persons died during the week, as we make this report we believe that these numbers have changed by increasing.

Background information

Kalemie city is located on shore of Lake Tanganyika and on the banks of Lukuga River, it is the main city of the Tanganyika Province in the Democratic Republic of

Congo which became a Province in 2015, because of being newly established, the City does not yet have the necessary infrastructure. It is highly commercial and attracts people from various corners of the country and outside the country mainly Tanzania and Burundi.

It is estimated that more 700,000 people are living in Kalemie city among them only 3,000 people have a tap of water in their compound, the current water installations were put in place for 100,000 people.

Among the natives who are the majority of the people, 70% are former Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who self-integrated and started a new life by constructing temporal houses in the city of Kalemie.

History of Cholera

The first cases of Cholera were reported in Kalemie in 1976 and originated from Kigoma, Tanzania, but the very severe Cholera outbreak which killed so many people appeared in 1990. In 2021, 2022, 2023 there was flooding caused by the increasing of waters from both Lake Tanganyika and Lukuga River which affected the houses of at least 50% of the current population and these houses are still effected by waters up to now.

On top of Cholera, the city is also affected by Malaria and other hydric diseases which highly affected the most vulnerable people.

The current Cholera outbreak



Some of the IDPs now in Kikongo Camp selling food items on the roadside of the city, which have no toilets.

From time to time there are manageable cases of Cholera in Kalemie, however in February 2025 there was an influx of people running from the war in North and South Kivu and stayed everywhere on streets, churches and schools in areas also which are flooded by water. The lack of proper management of the influx of war survivors are the current cause, however the cause of the current increased numbers of cases remain the lack of access to clean water, access to Toilets and other Hygiene services.

Hygiene in Kalemie City



Every rubbish in the city is thrown here, but it is the very same place where people collect water which they use at home. This photo was taken last week but as we make this report some among these people have already died while others are still in the hospital now.

As we have said, 70% of the native residing in Kalemie are former Internally Displaced Persons, who even up to now are living in temporal houses because they are either poor or lack support in order to build durable buildings. The very first problem in the placement of **pit-latrines** and their management especially when they are full. First of all pit-latrines are put near the houses, they are not properly

covered and not cleaned all the time which causes flies, once they are full, they are just abandoned without being covered by soil. Some pit-latrines are placed near the stream of water which people use, wells of water are not constructed in order to provide clean water to people, the same place where people collect water from is the same place where people wash and bathe from in the water sometimes on the River and sometimes on the Lake. When it rains, the rain collects human wastages from the pit-latrines towards the water, but also it is evident to observe human wastages in many places including on the roadsides.

In Kalemie, people are not used to boil drinking water and do not have the habit to wash their hands with soap. In schools, at health centers, at churches, and market places including other public places, hygiene is not among the priorities.

Access to water

As we said, only 3,000 people have access to clean water from the tap, and again this water is not regular, in some places it may come once in a month. The REGIDESO which is the National Agency for water in DRC does not give a clear information why water is not regular.

The other available opportunities to access water is to dig down and create a space where water will be stored but again this is one among the problems because these water holes are not clean, to collect water from the stream and which is not also constructed and the last is to collect water from the river and from the lake.

Interventions in place

Currently we have in place both the Provincial Government and her partners mainly Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) who are mainly focused on treating the cases of Cholera in the hospital.

Over the years, not much is done in terms of prevention through a clear education approach to people and the promotion of good hygiene practices in the City of Kalemie.

The Mayor of Kalemie organized the very first meeting bringing together local leaders in order to discuss about water crisis,

And for the last three consecutive days, REGIDESO has provided people with water which is treated,

Solutions

In order to reduce Cholera in Kalemie we must come up with innovations. Let us remind that this city is affected by Cholera each year especially in May, June, July and August, during this dry season water is a problem, the lake is affected by heavy winds, and most of stream of water have dried up. But also water depends on electricity but again during the dry season electricity is not regular.

Awareness

We must put in place regular awareness campaigns focusing on people in their communities about best hygiene practices, the construction of better pit-latrines, cooking drinking water, and washing hands with soap. This should done in different communities and target people where they are staying,

The construction of stream of water and water holes

We need to construct at least 50 streams of water and at least 100 water holes in the city where people can collect clean water from,

Promote cleanness in public places

Public Restaurant, Markets, Churches, Schools, Streets should have access to clean water, ensure food it good, use soap in order wash hands, and manage the plates and cups very well,

Public Toilets

We need to construct at least 10 public Toilets in the City especially highly populated areas where people no access to a clean toilet,

To collect rubbish in the City,

We have also observed that collecting rubbish is one among the problems, there initiatives should come up in order to collect the rubbish, this needs two vehicles,

Hygiene education

This should be part of the subjects in schools at all levels, and in public places such as at church, in the same way a team should be in place to monitor the hygiene situation in the city,

To expand the access to clean water and increase the number of people having taps in their compound,

Promote the construction and the availability of modern health centers,

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