

## Cholera outbreak in Iraq spreading

WHO: Disease has caused 11 deaths; 30,000 have possible symptoms

**The Associated Press**

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GENEVA - An outbreak of cholera in Iraq has spread, with new cases confirmed in Baghdad, Basra and, for the first time, the northern districts of Tikrit, Mosul and Dahuk, the World Health Organization said Tuesday.

This takes to 2,116 the number of confirmed cases of cholera in Iraq, WHO said. Eleven people have died so far.

"It shows that people are moving, and when people are moving they are spreading cholera," said Claire-Lise Chaignat, a cholera expert at WHO.

The global health body also said it estimates that more than 30,000 people have fallen ill with acute watery diarrhea, which may later be confirmed as cholera.

More than two-thirds of the confirmed cases are in the northern province of Kirkuk, where cholera was first reported on Aug. 13, WHO said.

While the number of deaths from the disease has so far been low, "it continues to spread across Iraq and dissemination to as yet unaffected areas remains highly possible," WHO said.

A new case in Baghdad has taken the number of confirmed infections there to two, said WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib. On Monday a woman in the Iraqi capital died from the disease.

Six cases have also been confirmed in Tikrit and two have been confirmed in Mosul, both to the northwest of Baghdad.

One case has been confirmed in Dahuk, in the far north of the country near the Turkish border.

Chaignat said a further confirmed case in Basra was likely unrelated to the other outbreaks, as cholera is endemic to the southern district.

Cholera is a gastrointestinal disease that is typically spread by drinking contaminated water and can cause severe diarrhea that, in extreme cases, can lead to fatal dehydration.

It can be prevented by treating drinking water with chlorine and improving hygiene conditions.

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