

THE ORT NEWSLETTER

—January 2024—

As we welcome the new year, USAID's Outbreak Response Team (ORT) would like to reflect on its accomplishments in its inaugural year. The ORT, which is now staffed up to 12 full-time specialists, was notified of nearly 30 infectious disease outbreaks from USAID Missions and responded to eight outbreaks in nine countries in 2023. This edition of the ORT Newsletter highlights the ORT's work on those nine outbreaks.

SUDAN EBOLAVIRUS (SUDV) OUTBREAK IN UGANDA

On January 11, 2023, the ORT celebrated the declaration of the end of the SUDV outbreak in Uganda. The outbreak, which was declared on September 20, 2022, reported 164 cases (142 laboratory-confirmed and 22 probable), 77 deaths (55 laboratory-confirmed and 22 probable), and 87 recoveries. While most cases occurred in Mubende District, the outbreak spread to a total of nine districts, including the capital city, Kampala.

USAID provided over \$22 million to support areas designated by the Government of Uganda. USAID funding supported a breadth of response activities, including risk communication and community engagement, case management, infection prevention and control (including in private facilities), surveillance and contact tracing, safe and dignified burials, mental health and psychosocial support for survivors, health care waste management, border health, and preparedness. Additionally, USAID provided over 15,500 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) and related supplies from the USAID/WHO emergency stockpile to protect health workers in Uganda. USAID also provided \$7 million to support neighboring at-risk countries: The DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Tanzania. Check out this [blog post](#) that summarizes how USAID worked with partners to support Uganda to contain and end the spread of the outbreak.

The USG mobilized a whole-of-government interagency response through the USG Ebola Response Team (ERT), led by the National Security Council, with USAID, CDC, State and other USG partners working closely together. USAID played a prominent role in the ERT, including serving as the Deputy Ebola Operations Lead for the global response, leading the regional preparedness and strategic communications working groups, and serving as the Secretariat.



Motorcyclists display EVD fliers to the public in Wakiso district.

PLAGUE OUTBREAK IN MADAGASCAR

From August 2022 to August 2023, Madagascar reported 383 cases of Plague across 30 districts. This represents 80% more cases in the 2022-23 season compared to 2021-22 in the same time period. The situation was even more grave as Plague was anticipated to reach the capital prior to tropical cyclones. The ORT provided \$100,000 to the USAID Mission's bilateral partner, RISE IPM. Through this funding, RISE IPM was able to:

- Support testing of over 360 samples for RDT, qPCR, and culture bacteriology
- Procure 4,500 sampling kits

- Deliver 714 RDTs and 710 kits across 18 districts
- Support 43 pneumonic and 334 bubonic human plague case surveillance
- Capture 330 rodents and identify plague in fleas among four districts
- Train 217 healthcare workers in plague prevention, detection, and response.

MARBURG VIRUS DISEASE (MVD) OUTBREAKS IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA & TANZANIA

On February 13, 2023, Equatorial Guinea declared its first ever MVD outbreak. Within 24 hours of the declaration, the ORT activated the GH Marburg Response Team to guide communications, intra-and inter-agency coordination, and USAID assistance. When a second, unconnected MVD outbreak was declared in Tanzania on March 21, the Marburg Response Team expanded its efforts to also support Tanzania and its surrounding countries. In total, Equatorial Guinea reported 39 cases (16 laboratory confirmed and 23 probable) with 35 deaths (12 laboratory-confirmed and 23 probable) and 4 recoveries. In Tanzania, 9 cases (8 laboratory-confirmed and 1 probable), 6 deaths (5 laboratory-confirmed and 1 probable), and 3 recoveries were reported. No cases were confirmed in neighboring countries outside of either Equatorial Guinea or Tanzania.

USAID provided over \$5.3 million to WHO and UNICEF to address gaps across all technical pillars of the responses, including surveillance and contact tracing; case management; risk communication and community engagement (RCCE); infection prevention and control (IPC); lab support, operations and logistics; and points of entry (POE) screening.

The USAID Team worked closely with the USG Marburg Response Team, led by the NSC with USAID, CDC, State and other USG partners working closely together. USAID staffed the Deputy Operations Official position, led the Regional Preparedness working group, and participated in relevant working groups.

The team stood down following the official declarations of the end of the Marburg outbreaks in Tanzania on June 2 and in Equatorial Guinea on June 8.

CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN MALAWI

In 2022-2023, Malawi experienced its worst cholera outbreak in recorded history with cases reported in all 29 districts across the country with a case fatality rate (CFR) of over 3%, far exceeding WHO's benchmark for care of less than 1%. At the peak of the outbreak, over 600 cases and 20 deaths were being reported on a daily basis. Due to the seriousness of the outbreak as an outlier in both its severity and geographic spread; the ongoing threat of further regional spread; overwhelming country capacity; resource gaps; and increased need for information management and coordination across USAID, USG, and external stakeholders, GH established the GH Malawi Cholera Response Team in February 2023. This team was coordinated by the ORT, with members cross-cutting several offices in GH as well as USAID's Bureau for Africa (AFR) and Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). USAID provided approximately \$4.2 million to support cholera response efforts in Malawi, which included \$738,896 from the ORT in prepositioned GHS outbreak funds with UNICEF. This was the first time GHS funds have been used to support cholera.



Cumulative Cases of Cholera by Districts at Peak of Outbreak (January 2023)

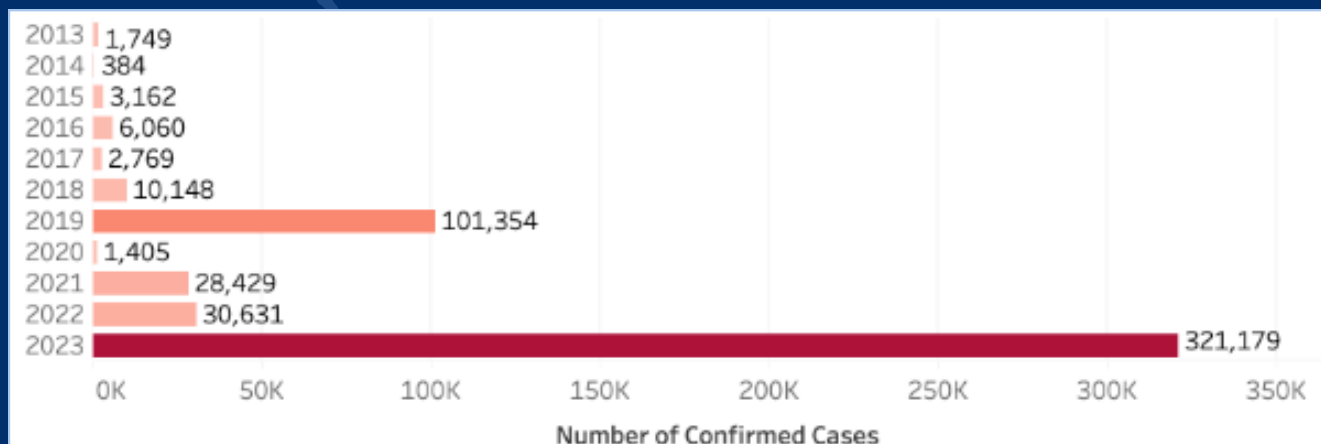
This GHS funding to UNICEF, which complemented additional BHA funding, supported the cholera response at a critical time as people were returning from camps following tropical cyclone Freddy as well as stamping out the outbreak during the dry season. Additionally, UNICEF supported targeted districts with risk communication and community based social mobilization to continue promoting cholera prevention behavior as well as ensuring access to safe water by rehabilitating water supply facilities and providing essential hygiene kits for cholera prevention.

The GH Malawi Cholera response team stood down on June 5 as cases substantially and steadily declined, and the WHO downgraded the outbreak from “acute risk” to “active risk.”

DENGUE OUTBREAK IN BANGLADESH

While dengue is endemic to Bangladesh, its outbreak in 2023 was the worst on record with an unusual surge in terms of seasonality and an unusual episodic amount of rainfall. By August, over 123,000 cases and 590 deaths were already reported. In comparison, Bangladesh reported a total of 101,354 cases in its last major dengue outbreak in 2019. Due to the severity of the outbreak and risk of spread, the ORT provided \$250,000 in prepositioned GHS outbreak funds to UNICEF to support the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) response, with a focus on risk communication and community engagement, which the GOB has identified as immediate needs.

Confirmed Cases of Dengue in Bangladesh (2013 - 2023)



DIPHTHERIA OUTBREAK IN NIGERIA

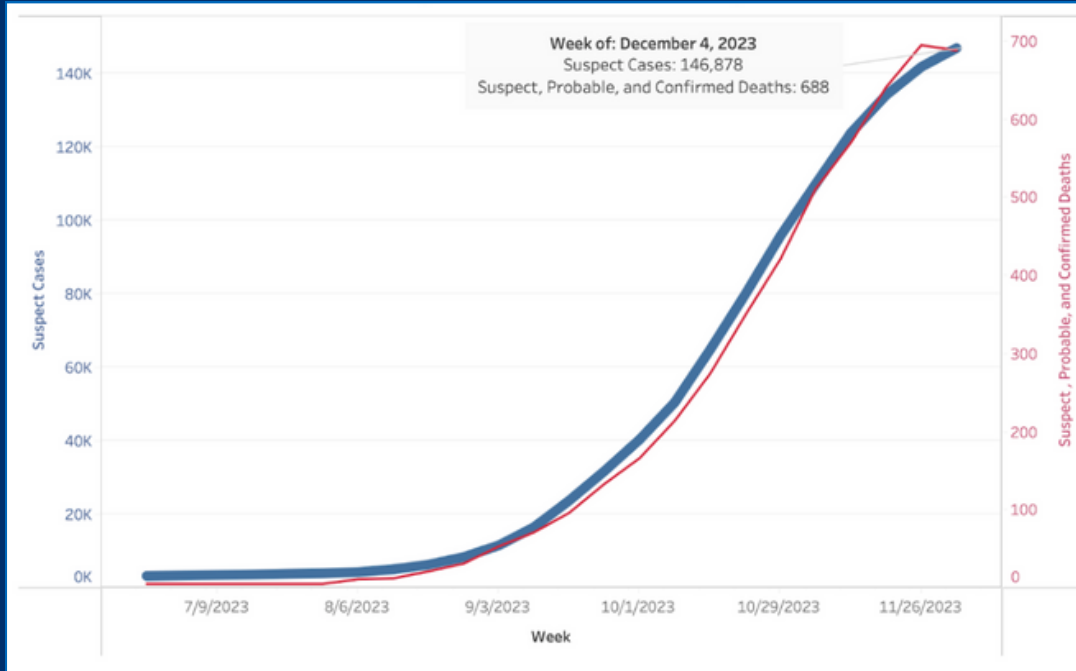
In 2023, Nigeria reported its most severe diphtheria outbreak. As of December 3, Nigeria CDC reported 20,725 total cumulative suspected cases, of which 12,505 are confirmed. In December, the ORT provided \$250,000 in prepositioned GHS outbreak funds in UNICEF, complementing other USAID/Nigeria support to the Government of Nigeria's response. UNICEF is supporting the existing response with a focus on the case management technical pillar aid in the setting up and operationalizing diphtheria treatment centers (DTCs) and targeted capacity building and training of health workers (including community health workers) on diphtheria case management and early detection.

DENGUE OUTBREAK IN BURKINA FASO

Since August 2023, Burkina Faso has been experiencing a concerning surge in the incidence of dengue fever cases and fatalities. As of December 4, 2023, the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene (MoHPH) in Burkina Faso has reported approximately 146,878 suspected cases and more than 688 related deaths. Despite the expected annual increase in cases during the rainy season as the virus is endemic in Burkina Faso, the current caseload represents the highest ever recorded to date, further signaling the severity of the

ongoing situation: in comparison, Burkina Faso recorded 13,135 suspected and confirmed cases in its last major dengue outbreak in 2017. In December, the ORT provided \$250,000 in prepositioned GHS outbreak funds to UNICEF and WHO, complementing other USAID/Burkina Faso support to the MoHPH response. The funds are facilitating the provision of medical and laboratory supplies, as well as the implementation of case management and risk communication initiatives.

Suspected Cases & Suspected, Probable, and Confirmed Deaths from Dengue in Burkina Faso (June 25 - December 9, 2023)

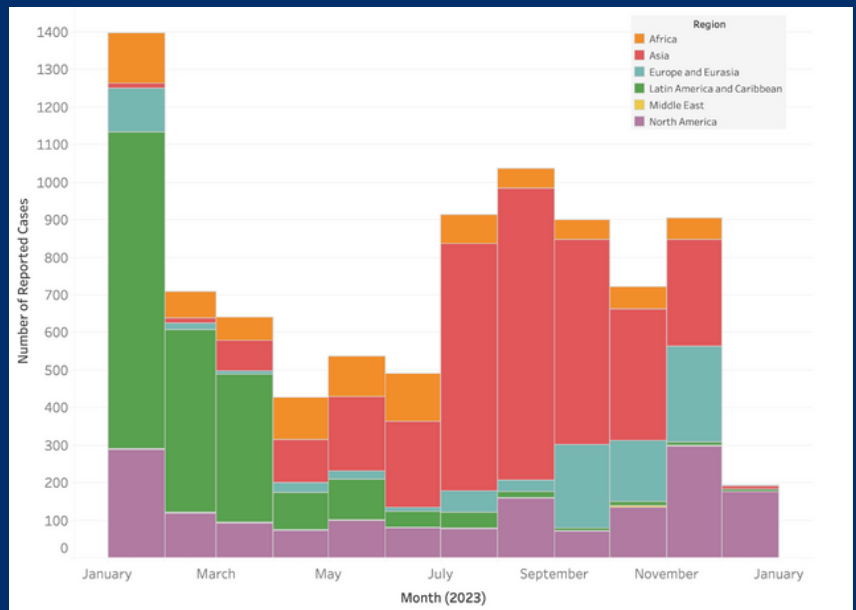


THROUGHOUT 2023

GLOBAL MPOX OUTBREAK

Globally, over 8,870 confirmed cases of mpox were reported throughout the world in 2023. Over a third of all annual cases were reported in Asia, where many countries experienced an unusually high number of cases throughout July to September. Additionally, in 2023, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) experienced its largest mpox outbreak. The country reported 14,310 suspected cases and 660 suspected deaths as of December 19 and documented sexual transmission of the mpox virus clade I for the first time. Most global cases associated with the 2022-2023 mpox Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) declaration were clade II, which has not been reported in DRC.

Number of Mpox Cases Reported by Region Monthly in 2023



The ORT continued to support mpox vaccine donations and provide technical support to countries with surges of mpox cases throughout 2023. From an initial \$7 million investment, USAID partners continued to support countries in the areas of RCCE, lab support, case management, among others. The ORT is working with the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Global Affairs (HHS/OGA) to support Jynneos mpox vaccine donation to priority endemic countries; specifically Nigeria and DRC, which have made requests for vaccines. USAID also continues to coordinate closely with CDC, State and other USG partners on any mpox related activities.

EMERGENCY STOCKPILE

The ORT maintains two emergency stockpiles with WHO and FAO for infectious disease outbreaks in humans and animals. These are limited stockpiles meant to provide stopgap measures to cover initial response commodity needs and include personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectants, decontamination equipment, and some laboratory reagents and consumables.

In 2023, the ORT deployed PPE and lab supplies from WHO and FAO emergency stockpiles to 13 countries to support both human and animal outbreaks (Marburg, Avian Influenza, Anthrax, Rabies).