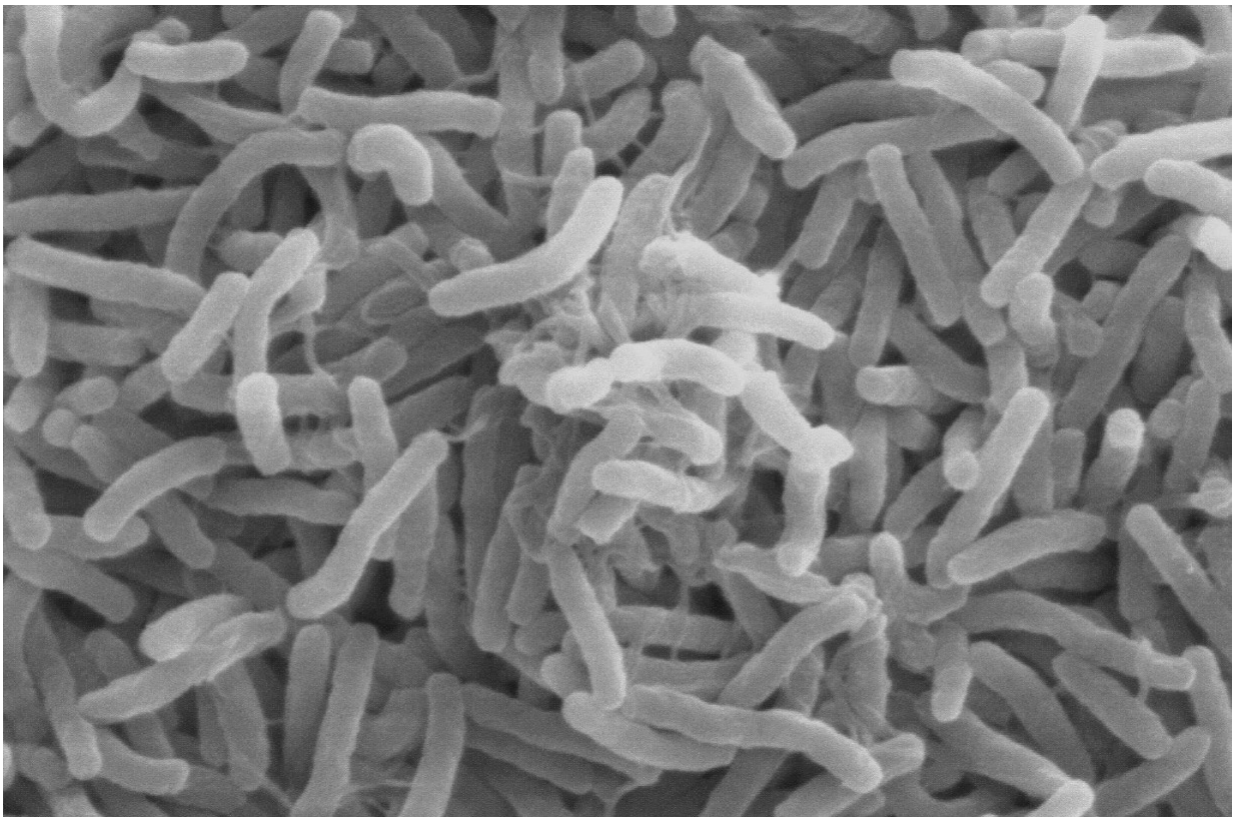


Zimbabwe launches cholera vaccination drive after 49 deaths: WHO

October 5 2018



Scanning electron microscope image of *Vibrio cholerae*. Credit: Wikipedia

Zimbabwe has begun an oral vaccination drive to curb a cholera outbreak which has claimed at least 49 lives over the past month, a WHO official said Friday.

The [cholera](#) outbreak, first detected outside Harare on September 5, prompted the [health ministry](#) to declare an emergency in the capital.

With 9,000 suspected cases so far, the disease has spread to other towns as well as rural areas across the country.

Authorities have banned public gatherings in Harare while health ministry personnel are supervising the burial of victims

"The oral cholera vaccination is targeting 1.4 million [people](#) in high-density areas from the age of one with one dose," Marc Poncin, a WHO vaccination expert in Harare, told AFP.

"A second dose will be provided within six months in order to provide at least three years' protection," he said adding that the protection was temporary and that the best way to prevent cholera remained "improved water, sanitation and hygiene".

Residents attended health centres in the capital Friday for their first dose.

"I came here so get vaccination.... Too many people have died of the disease. It's scary," said Noreen Mahiya, 20.

Cholera outbreaks occur regularly in Zimbabwean cities where supplies of drinking water and sanitation facilities are erratic and infrastructure has collapsed due to years of neglect.

Zimbabwe, which was ruled by Robert Mugabe from independence in 1980 until his ouster last year, suffered its worst cholera outbreak in 2008.

Around 4,000 people died and at least 100,000 people fell ill.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who succeeded Mugabe, has pledged to tackle the current [outbreak](#) which he called "this medieval disease".

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