



AFRICA/SIERRA LEONE - State of national emergency for the worst cholera outbreak in recent years

Freetown (Agenzia Fides) - West Africa is experiencing the worst cholera outbreak in recent years. In Sierra Leone, home to six million people assisted by one of the worst health care systems in the world, with only one doctor for 34,744 inhabitants, a state of national emergency has been declared. From January to August this year, more than 13,000 cases has been recorded in the country, with at least 300 deaths, twice the number compared to the last epidemic records dating back to 2007. According to the local Ministry of Health, 8 of the 13 districts have been infected, including the capital Freetown. The situation in the northern district of Port Loko and the southern Moyama is serious. The infection is mainly due to lack of clean water and adequate sanitation, also the torrential rains have worsened the situation further. The country lives with diseases and infections every day. In the area of Mabela children splash around in the river with pigs, rummaging through garbage looking for something to sell, unaware of the dangers they face, while the pigs look for something to eat. In addition to Sierra Leone also Guinea, Mali, Niger and Congo are dealing with small outbreaks of cholera which are likely to get worse, in an area where two thirds of the population does not have a sewer system. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 27/08/2012)