

Cholera Breakout At Hammanskraal

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Release date: 02 June 2023

On Wednesday, 24 May 2023, the humanitarian aid organisation, Gift of the Givers Foundation distributed thousands of litres of water to clinics across the Hammanskraal area to try and alleviate the cholera breakout crisis. At the time, 17 people had died, with 2 more announced thereafter by the Department of Health making it a total of 19 deaths.

Residents of Hammanskraal are warned not to drink the contaminated and untreated tap water. As no one knows where the cholera comes from, the community is panicking

In light of the crisis, South Africans are urged to come together and help the community of Hammanskraal, including companies that sell water.

To date, over 1 400 5L and 140 10L bottles of water were distributed across four clinics by Gift of the Givers. According to its founder, Imtiaz Sooliman, on Monday, 22 May 2023, a team reported to Jubilee District Hospital, which was treating affected people during the outbreak after Moretele Local Hospitality asked for help.

On Sunday, 21 May 2023, the Gauteng Department of Health first announced that there was a cholera outbreak in the area after lab results were positive for the stool specimens on 19 people who presented with diarrhoea symptoms including stomach cramps and nausea.

At the time, *News24* had previously reported that Deputy Health Minister Sibongiseni Dhlomo said there were 41 positive cases of cholera nationwide. Specifically, there was one in Limpopo, six reported cases in the Free State, and 34 in Hammanskraal.

People are dying of a preventable and easily treatable disease. Cholera is caused by intake of contaminated food or water with the potentially deadly bacteria. Now is the time for the Department of Water and Sanitation to work with municipalities such as the City of Tshwane to invest in South Africa's basic water and sanitation infrastructure. This is to avoid possible future outbreaks that can be prevented.

Back in 2019, the South African Human Rights Commission had already found that the water quality in Hammanskraal was not fit for human consumption, which the government did not address then.

But in light of the recent outbreak, Deputy Health Minister Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo along with David Mahlobo Deputy of Water and Sanitation have visited Jubilee District Hospital in Hammanskraal to assess the situation and are to start implementing government intervention plans to combat the cholera outbreaks.

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