

EL NINO RAINS INTENSIFY RECORD DENGUE OUTBREAK IN PERU

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June 09, 2023 02:08 pm | Updated 02:08 pm IST

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A health worker fumigates for mosquitoes to help mitigate the spread of dengue, outside a home at La Primavera shantytown in Piura, Peru, Saturday, June 3, 2023. Dengue, a viral disease transmitted by a mosquito, causes flu-like symptoms, such as muscle pain and fever. | Photo Credit: AP

Peru's worst [dengue outbreak](#) on record could intensify further as an El Nino climate phenomenon brings torrential rains and mosquitoes, driving the death toll this year past 200 with over 130,000 recorded cases, the health ministry said on Thursday.

Most of the deaths have occurred in northern Peru, where hospitals have exceeded their capacity, bringing back recent memories of the health crisis suffered by the country during the coronavirus pandemic.

The country's health authorities have pointed towards the El Nino as one of the key drivers of the surge in cases. The natural climate phenomenon fuels tropical cyclones in the Pacific, boosting rainfall and flood risk in the region.

The spike in cases this year is far higher than a major outbreak in 2017, when there was also an El Nino.

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A rainy season fosters mass reproduction of mosquitoes due to the accumulation of water in the cities.

Peruvian President Dina Boluarte signed a decree on Thursday declaring a two-month "state of emergency" in 18 of the country's 24 regions to allow swift official action for "imminent danger from heavy rainfall" this year and next.

Dengue is transmitted through the bites of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. Its symptoms include fever, eye, head, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting and fatigue.

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