

# Global Health Newsletter

September 2023

## Staten Island University Hospital

Madi Lindauer, MD MPH

### Americas

#### Festival in Peru that Uses Clowns to Promote Health

Iquitos, a city of 400,000 people in the Peruvian Amazon, holds the distinction of being the world's largest city inaccessible by road. It is a popular tourist hub, serving as the starting point for Amazon river cruises and Ayahuasca ceremonies. The city offers modern amenities like the Hilton Doubletree Hotel, numerous restaurants, and a lively nightlife.

Sitting on the Itaya River, Iquitos experiences seasonal flooding from January to June. 10-minute tuk-tuk ride away from the city of Iquitos is Zona Baja de Belén, a community facing significant challenges. With an extreme poverty rate of 14 percent (almost double the regional average), one-third of girls becoming pregnant before 20, and 90 percent of children reporting violence, this area grapples with difficult living conditions, waterborne diseases, and drowning incidents. The government has tried to relocate residents to a safer location 15 kilometers away.

In 2006, a unique initiative emerged, founded by Wendy Ramos, a popular TV clown actress, and Dr. Patch Adams, a doctor-clown-activist. The "Festival of Belén" brings together clowns, musicians, and artists to engage the community. It also hosts pop-up health clinics with dental, medical, mental health, and nutrition services, addressing critical healthcare needs.

#### Further reading

<https://www.patchadams.org/event/belen/#>

[https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/08/30/clown-festival-brings-critical-aid-and-inspiration-struggling-amazon?utm\\_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm\\_campaign=01c31a1581-](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/08/30/clown-festival-brings-critical-aid-and-inspiration-struggling-amazon?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=01c31a1581-)

[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_09\\_1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d842d98289-01c31a1581-61200533](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/08/30/clown-festival-brings-critical-aid-and-inspiration-struggling-amazon?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=01c31a1581-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_1&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-01c31a1581-61200533)



<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/08/30/clown-festival-brings-critical-aid-and-inspiration-struggling-amazon>

## Middle East/Northern Africa

### Morocco Shaken by 6.8 Magnitude Earthquake

On Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, at 23:00 local time, a powerful 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Morocco, primarily impacting the High Atlas Mountains. The disaster has claimed over 3,000 lives and left 5,500 injured, with these numbers expected to rise as rescue operations continue.

The epicenter was in the High Atlas Mountains, where the terrain is rugged, the climate harsh, and the indigenous Amazigh community resides. The region faces infrastructure challenges such as, unpaved roads, limited access to running water and inconsistent electricity which will make the rebuild even more difficult.

Most homes in the High Atlas mountains are constructed from local stone, wood and raw earth using centuries old techniques. These homes are praised for their abilities to help regulate heat in hot weather conditions of the regions; however, are unfortunately extremely vulnerable to earthquakes, contributing to the high casualty count. It is estimated that almost 1,500 people died in the province of Al Haouz, mainly inhabited by the Amazigh.

Marrakech, located 45 miles from the epicenter and home to 840,000 people, also suffered damage. Its historic Marrakech Medina, a UNIESCO world Heritage site, featuring centuries-old buildings with red sandstone walls was affected.

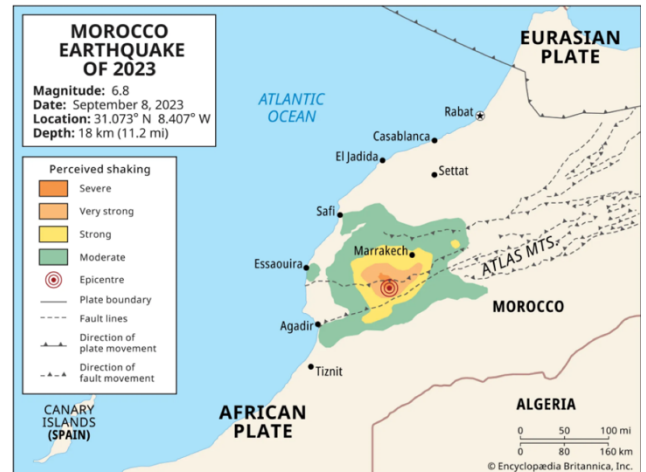
Earthquakes in Morocco are not new; however, few have been this powerful. This was the most powerful one within Morocco in 120 years. Morocco's deadliest one was in 1960, when a 5.9 magnitude earthquake killed more than 12,000 people. In 2004, a 6.4 magnitude quake resulted in 628 fatalities.

Internationally, there has been a swift response from all around the world. France gave \$5.3 million dollars, Spain sent 56 soldiers and four search-and-rescue dogs, Turkey pledged 265 personnel and 1,000 tents, and Britain deployed 60 search-and-rescue specialists. Despite diplomatic tensions, Algeria, reopened its airspace for humanitarian aid and medical flights. The Chinese Red Cross provided \$200,000 in aid and the UN and USA have also pledged support.

### Further reading

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/09/africa/morocco-earthquake-what-we-know-intl/index.html>

<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/MOROCCO-QUAKE/CONSTRUCTION/xmpjlblojpr/>



<https://www.britannica.com/event/Morocco-earthquake-of-2023>

## Deadly Flood in Libya

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, storm Daniel struck Libya, causing two dams to burst. This unleashed a massive 23-foot wave of water that surged towards the coastal city of Derna. The disaster claimed the lives of 4,000 people, with more than 9,000 still missing. Tragically, dead bodies were found floating in the water. An additional 30,000 residents of Derna have been displaced, drastically reducing the city's population from 100,000.

The rainfall that hit was brought by Storm Daniel, which also hit Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria. Derna, originally constructed during Italian occupation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, later became a hub for Islamist extremist groups following Gaddafi's ousting in 2011. It suffered airstrikes from Egyptian forces and later from Hiftar forces before falling under Hiftar's control in 2019. There has been little investment in its rebuild and which made it especially vulnerable to flooding.

The two dams that burst were built by a Yugoslav construction company in 1973 and 1977. The first dam, Derna, was 75 meters with a storage capacity of 4.76 billion gallons, while the second dam, Mansour, had a capacity of 396 million gallons. Neglected since 2002, these dams had known flood risks.

The relief efforts face additional challenges due to Libya's divided political landscape. The country has two rival governments that have struggled to cooperate in rescue efforts. The governmental divide occurred after the death of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. These floods primarily affected the eastern region, led by Marshal Khalifa Haftar, while the western region is controlled by an interim government led by businessman Abdel Hamid Dbeibah. The United Nations aims to hold elections by the end of 2023 to unify the nation.

### Further reading

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/14/middleeast/lethal-factors-leading-to-libya-floods-intl/index.html>

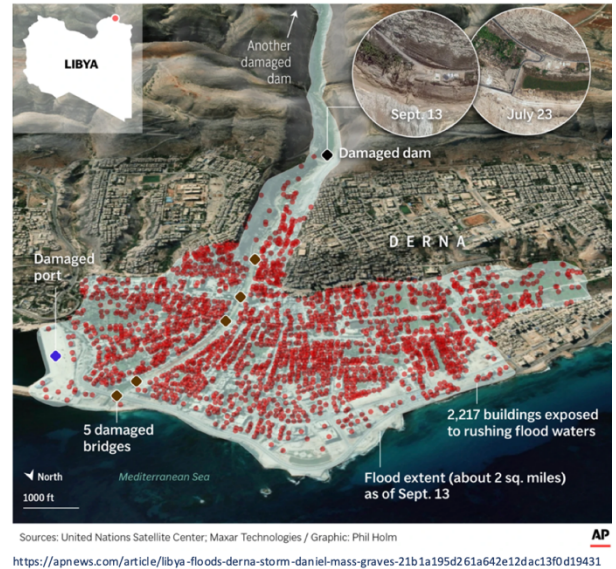
## Asia/Pacific

### Jailed in Pakistan for Refusing Polio Vaccine

In a significant move aimed at eradicating polio and increasing immunization rates, parents residing in Sindh province, Pakistan, who refuse to vaccinate their children may now face legal consequences. This legislation was signed into law in August and will be enforced starting in September. It not only addresses polio vaccination but extends to cover other crucial vaccines, including diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps and rubella.

Under this legislation, parents who decline vaccination for their children could be subject to a fine of 50,000 Pakistani rupees (\$160 USD) and may also face a one-month jail term. This stringent approach underscores the government's commitment to public health and the urgency of achieving comprehensive vaccination coverage.

In January, there was a countrywide polio vaccination campaign, during which more than 62,000 parents refused to have their children vaccinated. Pakistan, along with Afghanistan, remains one of the only two countries where wild polio is still endemic. Anti-vaccination sentiment is deeply rooted within Pakistan, driven by beliefs that vaccines are part of a Western conspiracy aimed at sterilizing Muslim children.



## Further reading

[https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/sep/06/parents-in-pakistan-could-be-jailed-for-polio-vaccine-refusal?utm\\_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm\\_campaign=bebbb3c38-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_09\\_06&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8d0d062dbd-bebbb3c38-3558646](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/sep/06/parents-in-pakistan-could-be-jailed-for-polio-vaccine-refusal?utm_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm_campaign=bebbb3c38-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8d0d062dbd-bebbb3c38-3558646)

# Sub-Saharan Africa

## Free Ambulance in Somalia

Aamin Ambulances is the largest free ambulance service in Mogadishu where three million people live. Aamin means “trust” in Somali. This ambulance service is almost entirely funded by Somali business people and charitable donations. It was founded by Abdulkadir Abdirahman Adan, 17 years ago. Abdulkadir Abdirahman Adan is a dentist who returned to Mogadishu in 2006 at a time of intense urban combat between Ethiopian forces and the Islamic Courts Union (which has become al-Shabab- the jihadist insurgent group).

Adan spent his savings on a second-hand minivan which he converted into Aamin’s first ambulance. The Aamin service now has 16 vehicles and a team of about 20 drivers and paramedics. It is one of two free ambulance services, the second which is provided by the Somali Red Crescent Society. Aamin has a 999 hotline that operates 24/7. In August they responded to 175 cases. Most of the emergencies they attend due to child malnutrition or complications in pregnancy. Since Aamin’s inception, two divers and a paramedic have been killed while working.



[https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/09/06/somalia-free-ambulance-service-saves-lives-operates-shoestring?utm\\_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm\\_campaign=a7f79192ca-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_09\\_07&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8d0d062dbd-a7f79192ca-3558646](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/09/06/somalia-free-ambulance-service-saves-lives-operates-shoestring?utm_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm_campaign=a7f79192ca-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8d0d062dbd-a7f79192ca-3558646)

Somalia remains mired in humanitarian crisis after almost three decades of war and repeated climate disasters. Half the population (about eight million people) are dependent on humanitarian aid. It has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world and 50 percent of children under five years old are acutely malnourished.

## Further reading

[https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/09/06/somalia-free-ambulance-service-saves-lives-operates-shoestring?utm\\_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm\\_campaign=a7f79192ca-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_09\\_07&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8d0d062dbd-a7f79192ca-3558646](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/09/06/somalia-free-ambulance-service-saves-lives-operates-shoestring?utm_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm_campaign=a7f79192ca-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8d0d062dbd-a7f79192ca-3558646)  
<https://aaminambulance.org>

# Europe

## Dangerous Air Pollution Levels in Europe

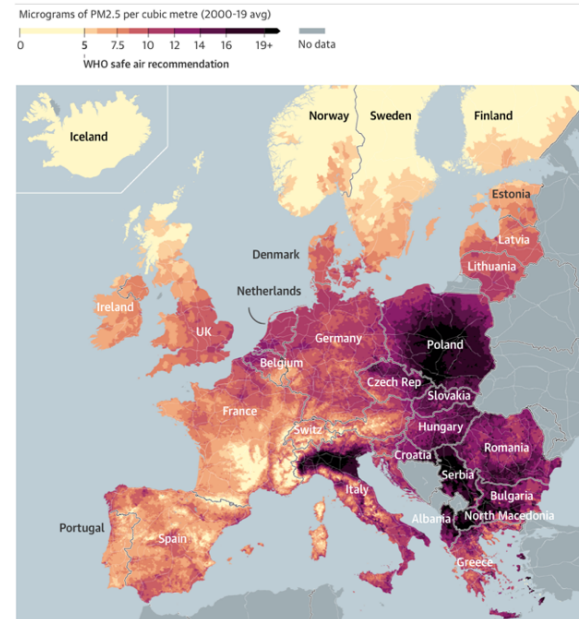
An recent analysis, using satellite images and data from 1,400 ground monitoring stations, has revealed 98 percent of Europe's population live within areas of severely harmful fine particle pollution. Two-thirds of people reside in regions where the air quality exceeds the recommendations of World Health Organizations (WHO) guidelines by double. North Macedonia, has the highest pollution level where two-thirds of the country live in areas more than four times the WHO guidelines for air pollution.

The main culprit behind this poor air quality is PM2.5 pollution, tiny airborne particles primary produced by burning fossil fuels. These particles are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter and can easily penetrate the lungs and are the leading cause of harm from air pollution, posing the most significant environmental risk for premature death. PM2.5 pollution is estimated to cause about 400,000 deaths across Europe.

In response to these troubling air quality levels, the European Parliament is taking action. They aim to align with the WHO's global PM2.5 standard by 2035, which involves a significant reduction in the allowed limit from 25 micrograms per cubic meter to 5 micrograms per cubic meter. This effort is focused on protecting the health of European citizens, recognizing the impact of air pollution on health.

### Further Reading

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/sep/20/revealed-almost-everyone-in-europe-breathing-toxic-air?utm\\_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm\\_campaign=fe81ea51a6-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_09\\_20&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8d0d062dbd-fe81ea51a6-3558646](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/sep/20/revealed-almost-everyone-in-europe-breathing-toxic-air?utm_source=Global+Health+NOW+Main+List&utm_campaign=fe81ea51a6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8d0d062dbd-fe81ea51a6-3558646)



## What's New at Northwell's Center for Global Health?

Daniel Leon MBA PMP

### Ukrainian President Zelenskyy visits Staten Island University Hospital

Northwell's Vice President of Global Health, Dr. Eric Cioè Peña stood alongside our President and CEO, Michael J. Dowling, as he received a merit award from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. This recognition honored Northwell's significant contributions to global health relief efforts in Ukraine, which included the donation of multiple pallets of medical supplies and a contribution of over \$350,000 raised by Northwell members for Ukraine Relief.

Also present at the event was Dr. Jonathan Berkowitz, Director of the Centralized Transfer Center and leader of the Telehealth support initiative in Ukraine. Northwell dedicated over 500 hours of physician time to support Ukrainian doctors faced with the challenges of treating trauma patients injured during the war.



President Zelensky was at Staten Island University Hospital visiting patients affected by the war in Ukraine. He awarded medals of honor to each patient and engaged in conversations with Michael Dowling and Dr. Cioè Peña. Their discussions centered around Northwell's ongoing support and the significance of this partnership for Ukraine.

Michael Dowling underscored the importance of Ukraine on the global stage and reaffirmed Northwell's unwavering commitment to supporting relief efforts in Ukraine through the Center for Global Health. Dr. Cioè Peña expressed intentions to visit Ukraine and support the enhancement of emergency service capabilities for those affected by the ongoing conflict.

### **Northwell Supply's Ukraine with 12 New Ambulances**

The Center for Global Health secured a donation of \$200,000 for 10 new ambulances via Ukraine Focus, an organization committed to aiding Ukraine during the war.

"We are most grateful to all those who have donated to the [Northwell Ukraine] fund, which allows us to provide direct medical relief through our partners," remarked Northwell's VP of Global Health, Dr. Cioè Peña. Among the donors is David S. Mack, a real estate magnate whose contribution to the Northwell Ukraine Fund enabled the purchase of 12 new ambulances.



In order to facilitate the delivery of the ambulances, Dr. Cioè Peña collaborated with Brittany Armstrong, the manager of emergency operations at Forest Hills hospital. Armstrong coordinated physicians who donated over 500 hours of their time to more than 200 Ukrainian patient care interactions, primarily through telemedicine.

Currently, Brittany is in Poland, representing the Center for Global Health at this year's World 4 Ukraine Summit. She is presenting Northwell's global health response to the Ukrainian crisis and plans to enhance post-war healthcare outcomes through telemedicine.

The Center for Global Health intends to further their collaboration with internal stakeholders and the Ukrainian government, aiming to use Northwell's telehealth and video conferencing capabilities to advance healthcare for Ukrainians living under the shadow of the ongoing conflict with Russia.

**For inquiries or concerns about assistance to Ukraine or other nations, reach out to the center for global health at [globalhealth@northwell.edu](mailto:globalhealth@northwell.edu).**

## **Upcoming Lectures/Conferences**

### **'Back to basics' with a digital twist: humanitarian principles and dilemmas in the digital age**

In this post, ICRC Senior Policy Adviser Pierrick Devidal reflects on some of the challenges and opportunities that digitalization creates for humanitarian organizations' ability to operate in line with the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

<https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2023/02/02/back-to-basics-digital-twist-humanitarian-principles/>



JOHNS HOPKINS  
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Humanitarian Health

Center for Global Women's Health and  
Gender Equity

September 28, 2023

12 noon – 1:20 pm

In Person: Wolfe Street  
Building W3008

# Gender in Humanitarian Action

## Speakers



**Valerie Percival, DrPH, MA**  
Associate Professor and Associate  
Director, Norman Paterson School of  
International Affairs  
Carleton University



**Kathryn Falb, ScD, MHS '07**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of International Health  
Center for Humanitarian Health  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of  
Public Health



**Caren Grown, PhD, MA**  
Senior Fellow  
Center for Sustainable  
Development,  
Global Economy and  
Development



**Zulfi Bhutta, MBBS, PhD**  
Robert Harding Inaugural Chair in  
Global Child Health  
Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto  
and  
Co-Chair of the Lancet Commission  
on peaceful societies through health  
and gender equality

## Moderators

**Rosemary Morgan, PhD**  
Associate Scientist and Associate Chair  
Department of International Health  
Center for Global Women's Health and Gender Equity  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Paul Spiegel, MD, MPH**  
Professor of the Practice  
Department of International Health  
Director, Center for Humanitarian Health  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Zoom Registration

