

MAJOR DISEASE OUTBREAK POSSIBLE IN AFRICA

Dec. 25 (IPS)--The deadly effects of deteriorating standards of living for workers worldwide are showing up in the so-called Fourth World where the American and British press have begun to report the outbreak of diseases and epidemics across the continent of Africa. This menacing public health breakdown occurs just at the beginning of the Hajj season when Muslims from all over the continent will be making their annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, thus increasing the possibility of widespread disease and plagues.

The International Press Service is investigating the extent of disease outbreak in the areas below, already publicly reported, and IPS is now researching other areas of population which are likely victims for spreading disease.

*Cholera has broken out in both Kenya and Rhodesia. Twenty-eight persons have died in the past few weeks in western Kenya near the town of Kisumu. There are no details on the number of deaths in Rhodesia.

*Bubonic plague has broken out in the Ovambo area of South West Africa, causing a mass exodus of civil servants and petit bourgeoisie.

In addition, it is known that the southern Sudan region experienced the worst flooding in 25 years this October, vastly increasing the potential for epidemics. In Ethiopia, where CIA-style counterinsurgency conditions culminating in a recent "revolution" have effectively meant that there is no government outside of the capital city of Addis Ababa, information about the extent of disease and famine is extremely sketchy and there have been no organized relief efforts. Reportedly, last year's drought in the northern region has moved to the south.

Latin American Disease Breakdown

In Latin America, official statistics in the continuing meningitis epidemic are 4,000 deaths and 40,000 cases. These figures, the latter using only four hospitals in the Sao Paulo region, are probably extremely low. IPS estimates that there were at least 10,000 deaths, as of November, in the past year.

Malaria outbreaks are reported in El Salvador, Central America with no figures given. In Trujillo, the north of Peru, 15 dead are reported so far of diptheria. The Colombian embassy in Santiago, Chile reports typhoid in "epidemic" proportions among the Chilean exiles in hiding there.