



April 17, 2023

STATEMENT ON THE NEW BREED OF MOSQUITO

The Accra Collective of the Socialist Movement of Ghana (SMG) is deeply worried about the malaria spreading new breed of mosquito which has been found in some parts of the Greater Accra Region and calls on the Government of Ghana to take immediate steps to deal with the threat of an escalation in malaria transmission.

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of mosquito which feeds on humans. People who get malaria are typically very sick with high fevers, shaking chills, and flu-like illness.

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that in 2020, 241 million clinical cases of malaria occurred, and 627,000 people died of malaria, most of them children in Africa. Because malaria causes so much illness and death, the disease is a great drain on many national economies. Since many countries with malaria are already among the poorer nations, the disease maintains a vicious cycle of disease and poverty.

Usually, people get malaria by being bitten by an infective female *Anopheles* mosquitoes. Only *Anopheles* mosquitoes can transmit malaria and they must have been infected through a previous blood meal taken from an infected person. When a mosquito bites an infected person, a small amount of blood is taken in which contains microscopic malaria parasites. About 1 week later, when the mosquito takes its next blood meal, these parasites mix with the mosquito's saliva and are injected into the person being bitten.

Because the malaria parasite is found in red blood cells of an infected person, malaria can also be transmitted through blood transfusion, organ transplant, or the shared use of needles or syringes contaminated with blood. Malaria may also be transmitted from a mother to her unborn infant before or during delivery ("congenital" malaria).

The Ghana Health Service (GHS), through its surveillance system, said it had detected the presence of a new breed of mosquito that transmits malaria, *Anopheles stephensi*, in Tuba and Dansoman in the Greater Accra Region.

What the public must also know is that this breed of mosquito cannot be killed by normal insecticides which are the usual killers of mosquitoes.

It is the first time the country has detected the mosquito breed which is usually not in West Africa but abounds in Asian countries.

Indeed, it is crucial to be concerned about the persistence of this mosquito species, as it could potentially lead to a surge in the mosquito population within our country. This, in turn, heightens the risk of malaria transmission. To mitigate this risk, we must take proactive measures to implement effective environmental management practices.



SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF GHANA (SMG)

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The presence of a robust mosquito species, such as *Anopheles stephensi*, that can thrive in water sources and withstand harsh environmental conditions, poses a significant concern. If this species becomes established in the local mosquito population, it is likely to result in an increase in overall mosquito numbers. This, in turn, could lead to a heightened risk of malaria transmission. Therefore, it is imperative to take proactive measures to prevent the proliferation of such mosquito species through effective environmental management practices.

The correlation between a rise in mosquito population and an elevated risk of malaria prevalence cannot be overlooked. Mosquitoes play a pivotal role in transmitting the malaria parasite from one person to another, and a surge in their population can heighten this risk. It is, therefore, imperative to take preventive measures, including effective environmental management, to mitigate the expansion of mosquito populations and reduce the potential for increased malaria transmission.

By implementing effective measures, such as environmental management and individual-level precautions, we can effectively combat malaria parasites. When each person takes responsibility for treating mosquito bites appropriately, even if a mosquito does bite, it will not be able to transmit parasites from one person to another. This collective effort at the individual level can contribute significantly to reducing the transmission of malaria and minimizing its impact on communities.

The Socialist Movement of Ghana would like to entreat all and sundry to ensure their environment is kept clean and sanitation is sustained to prevent these new breed mosquitoes from breeding and multiplying to cause harm to the public's health.

We also call on the Government of Ghana to immediately resume consultations with the Cuban Government on the revival of the malaria eradication project which was abandoned about six years ago.

There can be no good reason for the increase in the transmission of malaria, when many countries around the world have effectively eradicated the disease.

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