

Mauritana locust infestation spreading to Morocco: UN

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A desert locust. An invasion of crickets in Mauritania has spread to Morocco and the western Sahara, and could worsen if there is strong rainfall in coming weeks, the United Nations warned Friday.

An invasion of crickets in Mauritania has spread to Morocco and the western Sahara, and could worsen if there is strong rainfall in coming weeks, the United Nations warned Friday.

"The [larvae](#) and locusts are gathering in a worrying fashion to the west of Mauritania," said Elisabeth Byrs, spokeswoman for the UN Office for

the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"If the outbreak is not controlled and if unusually heavy and widespread rains were to fall in the next two months, then the situation will deteriorate further and there is an extremely high risk that it could lead to the early stages of an upsurge in the region."

"The south of Morocco and western Sahara have started to be contaminated... We must be extremely cautious and to sound the alarm before the situation deteriorates," she added.

In 2004, Mauritania was hit by a [locust](#) invasion that ravaged a vast quantity of crops and threatened nearly a million people with starvation.

Mauritania's Desert Locust Centre said Tuesday it was sending special teams to the infested areas to fight a possible new devastating locust invasion in the vast desert country.

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