

# New Ebola cases in DRC

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has mobilised its resources to curtail an outbreak of Ebola after the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ministry of health (MoH) informed it that of the five samples collected from suspected cases, one tested positive by RT-PCR for Ebola virus subtype Zaire. Additional specimens are currently being tested and results, including sequencing, are awaited to describe the outbreak.



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The WHO regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, has visited Kinshasa DRC, to discuss with national authorities and partners ways to mount a rapid, effective and coherent response.

The outbreak is in the Likati health zone, Bas Uele Province, in the northern part of the country bordering Central African Republic, which is around 1,400kms from the capital. So far, 11 suspected cases including three deaths have been reported.

Speaking at the meeting, Moeti said: "I am here to assure the government of DR Congo that in collaboration with the UN system and other partners, we will work together to respond to this outbreak. WHO has already mobilised technical experts to be deployed on the ground and is ready to provide the leadership and technical expertise required to mount a coordinated and effective response. I encourage to public to work with the health authorities and take the necessary preventive measures to protect their health."

The Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) has been activated to provide additional support if required. Reinforcement of epidemiological surveillance, contact tracing, case management, and community engagement are under way.

The first recorded case was a 45-year-old male. He was transported by taxi to hospital and was dead on arrival. The driver also fell ill and later died. A third person who cared for the first case also became ill and has subsequently died. At present, 25 contacts of the second patient who died are being followed. Of the cases and deaths, one has been tested PCR-positive for Ebola.

This is the eighth outbreak of Ebola virus disease since its discovery in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On 20 November 2014, in line with WHO recommendations, the Ministry of Health of DRC and WHO declared the end of the Ebola virus disease outbreak that started on 24 August 2014 and resulted in a total of 38 laboratory confirmed cases and 28 probable cases including 49 deaths in Boende, Equateur province.

## **Chronology of Ebola in DRC**

- 2014: 66 cases of EVD including 49 deaths diagnosed initially in Equateur province (Watsi Kengo, Lokolia, Boende, and Boende Muke).
- 2012: 62 cases including 34 deaths Orientale Province -Isiro (Bundibugyo virus)
- 2008-2009: 32 cases including 15 deaths in Kasai-Occidental (Zaire virus)
- 2007: 264 cases including 187 deaths in Kasai-Occidental (Zaire virus)
- 1995: 317 cases including 245 deaths, in Kikwit, Bandundu Province
- 1977: one case with one death in Tandala, Equateur Province
- 1976: 318 cases including 280 deaths in Yambuku - (Zaire virus)

The full extent of the 2017 outbreak is still not yet clear. Extensive investigation and risk assessments are being conducted and the findings will be communicated accordingly. WHO does not recommend any restriction of travel and trade to DRC based on the currently available information.

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