

Democratic Republic of the Congo (the) | Ebola Virus Disease



Core Details

Event ID:

2018-E000187

Date updated:

Wednesday, May 9, 2018 - 18:28

Region:

[AF](#)

Country:

[Democratic Republic of the Congo \(the\)](#)

EIS Status:

[Current](#)

Status:

[Current](#)

Hazard:

[Infectious](#)

Syndrome:

[Acute Haemorrhagic Fever Syndrome](#)

Aetiology:

[Ebola virus](#)

Disease:

[Ebola Virus Disease](#)

Verification Status:

[WHO-NFP risk assessment ongoing](#)

Laboratory Confirmed:

Yes

IHR Assessment:

[Public Health Risk \(PHR\)](#)

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IHR Criteria

Serious Public Health Impact

Outbreaks of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) can have major public health impact because of the potential for human-to-human transmission and high case fatality ratio. At this stage, the information concerning the exact extent of the epidemic (e.g. date of the first case, geographical distribution, number of contacts) are still unknown and investigations are ongoing.

Les flambées épidémiques de la maladie à virus Ebola (MVE) peuvent avoir un impact important sur la santé publique en raison du potentiel de transmission interhumaine et du taux de létalité élevé. A ce stade, les informations concernant l'ampleur exacte de l'épidémie (date du premier cas, répartition géographique, nombre de contacts) sont encore inconnues et les investigations sont en cours.

Unusual or unexpected

Ebola outbreaks are infrequent events and viral haemorrhagic fevers are diseases of special concern under the International Health Regulations (2005). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the risk of re-emergence of Ebola is known and the current outbreak is the ninth in the country since the discovery of the virus in 1976.

Les flambées épidémiques d'Ebola sont des événements peu fréquents et les fièvres hémorragiques virales sont des maladies particulièrement préoccupantes dans le cadre du Règlement Sanitaire International (2005). En République Démocratique du Congo, l'éventualité d'une réémergence du virus Ebola est connue et l'épidémie actuelle est la neuvième survenant dans le pays depuis la découverte du virus en 1976.

International disease spread

Although to date the cases have been reported in a remote area, the proximity of the epidemic focus to the Congo River which is bordering with the Republic of Congo, and the river links with the capitals of the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic lead to a possible risk of international spread.

Bien qu'à ce jour les cas aient été rapportés dans une région éloignée, il existe un risque de propagation internationale de l'épidémie dû à la proximité de la zone affectée du fleuve Congo qui borde la République du Congo et aux liens fluviaux avec les capitales de la République du Congo et de la République centrafricaine.

Interference with international travel or trade

WHO advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on the Democratic Republic of Congo based on the current information available on this EVD outbreak. WHO continues to monitor the situation.

[Latest Bulletin / Situation report](#)

[Event Update 2018-05-09](#)

Date / Time Published: 2018-05-09 19:41

Event description (Version Française ci-dessous)

On 08 May 2018 WHO was notified by the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of two confirmed cases of Ebola virus disease occurring in Bikoro Health Zone, Equateur Province.

Between 4 April 2018 and 5 May 2018, a total of 21 suspected viral haemorrhagic fever cases were reported from Bikoro Health Zone, Equateur Province, including 17 deaths. The patients presented with fever, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, myalgia and arthralgia, and some also showed haemorrhagic symptoms and signs. All cases were reported from the catchment area of the Ikoko-Impenge health facility, located 30 km from the central health zone office of Bikoro, which is 250 km from Mbandaka, the capital of Equateur Province. Of the 21 reported cases, 17 had epidemiological links (potential contacts with another suspect case).

Five samples were collected from hospitalized patients, three from Ikoko-Impenge and two from Bikoro. These were sent to Institute National de Recherche Biomédicale, Kinshasa on 7 May 2018, where two specimens from Ikoko-Impenge returned positive PCR tests for Ebola virus the same day.

Over the last four decades, the Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced eight Ebola outbreaks. The last epidemic took place in May 2017 in the health zone of Likati, Province of Bas-Uele. The ongoing epidemic is located in the Bikoro Health Zone, located in Equateur Province, in western Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the border with the Republic of the Congo. This is the fourth time that an Ebola outbreak has been reported in the former province of Equateur, after those of 1976, 1977 and 2014. However, this is the first time that Bikoro Health Zone is facing an Ebola outbreak.

The province of Equateur has an estimated population of 2.5 million people with 284 registered health facilities. Bikoro Health Zone has a population of around 163 000 people with 3 hospitals and 19 health centres covering the population, most with limited functionality. Medical supplies are provided by international bodies, but stock outs are frequent.

This epidemic occurs in the context of a prolonged cholera epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which affects in particular the nearby Lukokela health zone. Moreover, the country is going through a long-term economic and political crisis. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is responding to a Level 3 humanitarian emergency with over 4 000 000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 600 000 refugees.

Public health actions

- The Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deployed a Rapid Response Team to investigate cases and deaths reported in Bikoro Health Zone and provided emergency supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and chlorine to health centers.
- WHO has mobilized 1 million USD through the contingency fund for emergencies.
- WHO has shipped 1500 PPEs and related disinfectant to Kinshasa.
- An incident management team has been established across the three levels of WHO and a response plan is being developed.
- A surge team of experts from WHO has been formed for immediate deployment to fill the immediate gap in response to the outbreak.
- WHO has provided technical and operations support to the Ministry of Health and partners in the activation of a multi-partner multi-agency Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate the response at all levels.
- WHO has participated in a multisectoral assessment.
- MSF is setting up a treatment center for management of cases in the affected area.
- WHO has shared risk communication materials with the country in French and Lingala.
- Active surveillance activities among the community, the Ikoko-Impenge Health Center team and Bikoro General Reference Hospital are being undertaken.
- Immediate logistical capabilities and needs are being established.

WHO Risk Assessment

To date, the outbreak is reported in a remote area and appears to be geographically relatively limited. However, in view of the available data, the overall risk is considered high at the national level due to the nature of the pathology and the lack of epidemiological and demographic information to estimate the magnitude of the epidemic.

The overall risk at the regional level is considered moderate because of the proximity of the epidemic focus to the Congo river, which links with both the capitals of the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

Information available is currently limited and investigations are ongoing to assess the full extent of the outbreak and therefore high vigilance needs to be maintained. Based on the information currently available and the rapid response measures implemented by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO and partners, the event does not meet the criteria of a public health event of international concern as defined in the IHR (2005)^[1], and does not warrant the convening of an Emergency Committee under the IHR (2005).

WHO Recommendations

WHO advises against any restriction of travel and trade to Democratic Republic of the Congo based on the currently available information. WHO continues to monitor travel and trade measures in relation to this even, and currently there are no restrictions of the international traffic in place.

For further information, see:

<http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ebola-virus-disease>