



EBOLA EPIDEMIC IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

1. An outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) was declared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on 8 May 2018. Despite interventions by the State and assistance from various international organizations, the outbreak could not be controlled to date. Following an Emergency Committee meeting convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General on 17 July 2019, he declared the current outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) as defined in the International Health Regulations (IHR). The statement on this meeting is available at: www.who.int/news-room/detail/17-07-2019-ebola-outbreak-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-declared-a-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern.
2. Ebola is a severe, often fatal illness in humans. The virus can be transmitted to humans through contact with infected animals (after slaughtering, cooking or eating) or through contact with the bodily fluids (blood, stool, urine, saliva, semen) of infected persons. Ebola can present with symptoms that include fever, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, muscle pain, joint pain and sometimes bleeding.
3. A total of 2592 cases has been reported as of 21 July 2019, of which 2498 were confirmed cases and 94 probable cases of Ebola. 1649 deaths were confirmed due to Ebola, with another 94 cases probably due to Ebola. Several factors have contributed to the ongoing outbreak including the high density of the population in some areas, high mobility of the population, distrust and reluctance in the formal medical processes from the community, ongoing security concerns, inadequate technical assistance and a lack of resources to respond effectively to the outbreak.
4. The experimental vaccine that is currently being used in the DRC to protect persons whom have had contact with infected persons (contacts), seems to be successful. Although some cases have been imported from DRC to Uganda, the current outbreak has been restricted to the DRC, with no outbreaks due to local transmission having been identified in neighbouring countries.
5. Nationally, DRC has activated exit screening measures at the international airport at Kinshasa. One case of Ebola has been reported in Goma, which raised concern due to its international airport and its close proximity to Rwanda. Currently exit screening is recommended only for international airports within the DRC. ICAO urges States to follow WHO recommendations regarding Ebola screening measures. More detailed information on entry, exit and cross-border screening can be found at <https://www.who.int/ith/who-recommendations-for-international-traffic-19July2019.pdf>.
6. ICAO urges States to ensure the implementation of WHO Ebola recommendations, encourage the collaboration between the aviation, health and tourism sectors, ensure the implementation of the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to the management of infectious diseases; and to communicate to stakeholders the importance of consulting the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) guidance material and International Air Transport Association (IATA) guidelines on the management of an ill passenger in an airport terminal or on board. States are further encouraged to assist WHO with

contact tracing by providing passenger contact information to the WHO if requested by the WHO or IHR national focal point within a State.

7. In view of current available data, the WHO considers the overall risk for spreading of the disease at national and regional level to be very high, but at global level to be low.

8. Currently, WHO strongly advises against the closure of borders or implementing any restrictions on travel and trade, including general quarantine of travellers arriving from Ebola-affected countries (currently only the DRC). More detailed information regarding restrictions on travel or trade can be found at <https://www.who.int/ith/who-recommendations-for-international-traffic-19July2019.pdf>.

Issued under the authority of the Secretary General
