

Ebola Virus Disease (Bundibugyo)

20 May 2026

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is closely monitoring the Ebola virus disease outbreak caused by the Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and neighboring Uganda.

On 17 May 2026, the Director-General of **the World Health Organization (WHO)** **determined that the outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).**

Laboratory-confirmed cases of Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD), have been reported in Ituri Province, DRC. Uganda has also reported limited confirmed cases, considered to be linked to cross-border travel from DRC. National health authorities in DRC and Uganda, supported by WHO and international partners, have implemented outbreak control measures including rapid case detection and isolation, surveillance strengthening, infection prevention and control, contact tracing, community engagement, and screening at points of entry such as airports and border crossings.

The first meeting of the Emergency Committee was held on 19 May 2026. The Committee agreed on the decision to declare the current outbreak as a PHEIC and not as a pandemic under the current IHR stipulations. The Committee will shortly release advice on temporary recommendations for States Parties to respond to the event. Currently, WHO assesses the risk of the epidemic as high at the national and regional levels, and low at the global level.

BVD does not spread through casual contact or through the air; transmission occurs through direct contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person. Early supportive care, including rehydration and treatment of symptoms, improves survival.

WHO currently advises that appropriate health measures remain in place and WHO guidance be followed. Current WHO guidance advises that **countries should not close borders or impose restrictions on travel and trade, and entry screening outside the affected region is not considered necessary for passengers returning from areas at risk.**

Exit screening can be implemented for all persons at international airports for unexplained illness associated with fever and consistent with other symptoms of potential BVD. Health authorities should ensure that **confirmed cases and contacts of BVD must be detected and isolated and such individuals do not undertake international travel unless it is part of an appropriate medical evacuation.**

In line with WHO's recommendations, ICAO emphasizes that **international air travel can continue safely with proper precautions and adherence to established health protocols**. ICAO, through CAPSCA, continues to work closely with WHO and all Member States to mitigate risks, reassure the travelling public, and support the uninterrupted flow of essential air services. ICAO will update its guidance as necessary in light of the evolving situation and WHO recommendations.

Note: *Screening is defined as “the presumptive identification of unrecognized disease or defect by the application of tests, examinations, or other procedures which can be applied rapidly” - World Health Organization (1966).* The principles and practice of screening for disease.

References:

1. [WHO Director-General's address to Member States at the 79th World Health Assembly – 19 May 2026](#)
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3. ICAO guidance on Ebola: [CAPSCA - Ebola](#)
4. World Health Organization – Disease Outbreak News (16 May 2026): “Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, DRC & Uganda”. [Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, Democratic Republic of the Congo & Uganda](#)
5. World Health Organization – Statement (17 May 2026): “Epidemic of Ebola Disease caused by Bundibugyo virus ... determined a PHEIC.” [Epidemic of Ebola Disease caused by Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda determined a public health emergency of international concern](#)
6. WHO – Fact Sheet (24 April 2025): “Ebola disease – Key facts & overview.” [Ebola disease](#)
7. WHO FAQs on Ebola Disease: [Ebola disease](#)
8. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Press Statement (17 May 2026) on Ebola outbreak response. [CDC Mobilizes International Response Following Ebola Disease Outbreak in DRC and Uganda | CDC Newsroom](#)
9. WHO publication - Syndromic entry and exit screening for epidemic-prone diseases of travellers at ground crossings: Evidence review and a call for research - 2024