

6 **BEYOND OUR BORDERS**

The 'Beyond our Borders' column focuses on selected and current international diseases that may affect South Africans travelling abroad. Numbers correspond to Figure 6 on page 11.

1. Malaria: Namibia

The Oshikoto Region of Namibia has reported 102 new malaria cases in January 2017 as compared to the 25 cases recorded in the same period in 2016. The rise is attributed to heavy rains and increased mosquito breeding. There have been no reported deaths.

2. Plague: Madagascar

The number of cases of plague in Madagascar has risen to 68 cases with one more death bringing the total number of deaths to 27. These occurred in the mountainous area of Befotaka in southeastern Madagascar, which is an insecure and isolated area that is difficult to reach, thereby making attempts to control the outbreak quite difficult.

There have also been unconfirmed reports of a second cluster of 30 cases in an adjacent area where no plague has been reported since the 1950s.

3. Ebola: West Africa

As per the January 2017 Communiqué, there are still no new cases of Ebola. Research into an effective vaccine is still ongoing.

4. H7N9: China and Taiwan

The first case of H7N9 was reported by Beijing after a 68-year-old patient from a neighbouring province was transferred to the capital for treatment and remains critically ill.

The death toll has risen to 30 after one person died in February in the Yunnan province. More than 125 cases have been reported for the 2016/2017 flu season, although exact numbers are still to be confirmed.

The Centre for Disease Control in Taiwan reported its first case of H7N9 for 2017 in a man that had travelled from China in January. The man's fever was detected by the airport health services and he is currently being treated in ICU whilst 108 of his contacts are being traced.

5. Lassa Fever: Nigeria

3 more cases of Lassa fever have been reported in the Nimba district, Liberia with 2 resultant deaths and over 100 contacts needing to be traced and observed.

In Nigeria, a new case of Lassa fever has been confirmed by officials in Port Harcourt indicating that the disease has spread to the country's south-east region. In addition, the Nasarawa state government has confirmed the re-emergence of Lassa fever disease in north-central Nigeria. All 16 cases were from Lafia, the state's capital and 36 contacts were being followed up. Four deaths have been confirmed.

6. Yellow Fever: Angola and DRC

One of the largest and most challenging yellow fever outbreaks has been brought to an end through a strong, coordinated response to the outbreak since it arose in Angola in December 2015. Angola declared the end of the yellow fever outbreak their country on 23 December 2016 followed by a similar declaration by the DRC on 14 February 2017 after no new confirmed cases were reported from both countries for the past 6 months. There were 965 confirmed cases of yellow fever across the 2 countries with 137 deaths and more than 30 million people receiving the vaccine in response.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS, from Promed (www.promed.org)

**Figure 6.**

Current outbreaks that may have implications for travellers. Number correspond to text above. The red dot is the approximate location of the outbreak or event