

## INTERNATIONAL OUTBREAKS OF IMPORTANCE

## An update on Ebola virus disease outbreak, Democratic Republic of Congo

On 1 June 2020, seven cases of Ebola were reported in Mbandaka city and neighbouring Bikoro Health Zone in Équateur Province, and an 11<sup>th</sup> Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was declared.

However, in the last 19 days, as of 17 October 2020, there have been no new confirmed cases reported in Équateur Province or in treatment centres, with the last confirmed case reported on 28 September 2020.

As of 17 October 2020, a total of 128 cases (119 confirmed and nine probable) including 53 deaths (case fatality ratio 41.4%) has been reported. The case fatality ratio among confirmed cases is 37.0% (44 deaths/119 confirmed cases). The number of health workers affected remains at three, making up 2.3% of all cases.

In the past 21 days, one health zone and one health area have remained active (27 September 2020 to 17 October 2020). Since the start of the outbreak, a total of 13 out of 18 health areas and 42 out of 284 health zones have reported at least one confirmed case of EVD. A single confirmed case, from Lusengo health area in Makanza Health Zone, has been reported in the past 21 days.

On 17 October 2020, no new contacts were listed, with only Makanza and Mbandaka reporting contacts. Out of 204 active contacts, 191 (93.6%) have been followed-up. Two contacts became symptomatic in Makanza. Six confirmed cases of EVD remain in the community, including three in Lotumbe, two in Lolanga Mampoko and one in Mbandaka, the final outcome of these patients remains undetermined.

A total of 797 new alerts (including 12 deaths) was

reported on 17 October 2020. A total of 929 alerts has been recorded to date, of which 880 (94.7%) were investigated, and 304 of the 880 (34.5%) were validated. On 17 October 2020, there were 14 community death alerts, with only five safe and dignified burials performed.

A total of 38 053 people has been vaccinated since 5 June 2020. On 17 October 2020A, 320 new people were vaccinated with rVSV-ZEBOV-GP, including 127 contacts-of-contacts and 193 probable contacts; these figures include 148 first-line providers. Risk communication, mobilisation and community engagement continue.

The EVD outbreak in the DRC is currently halted, with no new confirmed cases of deaths reported in the past 19 days. Although the figures are encouraging, there are still many challenges being faced, including contacts who are lost to follow-up, confirmed cases within the community with indeterminate outcomes, and lack of community engagement in safe and dignified burials, resulting in ongoing risk of transmission. Further challenges include inadequate funding, inadequate laboratory reagents and commodities.

Continued advocacy with donors and fund agencies is required to strengthen EVD response activities. Commendably, EVD awareness activities are taking place in parallel with COVID-19 response activities, and the continuation of which will hopefully break the stigma associated with both diseases.

As of 27 October 2020, there are no EVD cases reported in South Africa associated with the current outbreak in the DRC. In addition, there are no suspected cases of EVD in South Africa at present.

Source: WHO: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int); WHO-AFRO, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS; ([outbreak@nicd.ac.za](mailto:outbreak@nicd.ac.za))