

INTERNATIONAL OUTBREAKS OF IMPORTANCE

An update on Ebola virus disease outbreak, DRC and Guinea

In Guinea, two confirmed and three probable cases have been reported in the past 21 days, from the sub-prefecture of Soulouta, Nzerekore prefecture with continued investigations into the sub-prefecture cluster (34 notified alerts, including three suspicious deaths).

As of 10 April 2021, a total of 23 cases has been reported, including 16 confirmed cases and seven probable cases, nine of whom have recovered and 12 have died (case fatality ratio 52.2%). The number of infected health workers remains five. Most of the confirmed and probable cases reported are female (13/23; 60.9%) and persons over 40 years. A total of 84 (40%) out of 209 contacts has been followed up and 140 contacts have been vaccinated. Seventy-seven alerts were notified on 10 April 2021, 64 in Nzerekore and 13 in Conakry, 34 (44%) of which were investigated within 24 hours, with four case validations, three of which were deaths and two of which were sampled.

Community resistance is slowly being overcome, although contact follow-up is still compromised. A cumulative total of 6 100 people has been vaccinated, including 444 high-risk contacts, 5 182 contacts-of-contacts and 474 probable contacts, and 2 368 frontline workers. Infection prevention and control activities have been carried out, with briefings on waste sorting, using gloves, hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, donning and doffing and development of the local improvement plan.

Risk communication and community engagement is ongoing, with particular efforts to combat rumours around Ebola treatment centres via mobile radio; and continued advocacy for support of response activities.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), no new cases have been confirmed since the last update. Since the start of the outbreak there have been 11 confirmed cases, with one probable case and six deaths (case fatality ratio 50.0%). Two health workers have been infected, accounting for 16.6% of cases. There are still 11 contacts who have not yet reached 42 days of follow-up who have not been seen; the search for them continues. Thirteen out of 17 (76.4%) of health areas in the northern part of North Kivu have reported 512 alerts, all of which were investigated. Of these, 69 were validated as

suspected cases and 49 (71.0%) samples were sent. Sampling challenges include patient refusal and kit shortages. Twenty-nine suspected patients are being followed in isolation in the health facilities.

A total of 1 898 people has been vaccinated, 542 of which are front line providers. No vaccinations have been carried out in the past week. Ten death alerts were received and all were sampled, five (50.0%) safe and dignified burials were carried out; the bodies of the remaining five are still in the mortuary. Infection prevention and control (IPC) activities continue as well as risk communication and community engagement activities.

The current EVD outbreak in DRC continues to remain inactive, with no new cases reported for 40 days. However, challenges remain around contacts who are lost to follow-up, poor feedback from health zones, inadequate financial resources for all response pillars, lack of capacity for isolation at health facilities and problems with integrating those who have recovered back into their communities. Additionally, security issues have prevented response activities by some partners. All these pillars require strengthening and funding needs urgently to be provided to continue robust response measures to prevent resurgence of the outbreak.

Guinea continues to experience challenges around locating contacts lost to follow-up and also in isolating suspected patients. Investigations continue into the Soulouta sub-prefecture cluster, with 34 alerts, three of which are deaths. A continuing funding gap for response activities will seriously impact continued surveillance and the required strengthening in contact follow-up and alert reporting if not closed. The EVD outbreak in Butembo, North Kivu is still inactive. However, contact tracing remains problematic with poor feedback from health zones. In addition, funding is running out and there are gaps in human resources that need to be addressed.

As of 24 April 2021, there are no EVD cases reported in South Africa associated with the current outbreak in the DRC and Guinea. In addition, there are no suspected cases of EVD in South Africa at present.