

EBOLA OUTBREAK IN DRC (weekly update):**Epidemiological situation** (May 24, 2018):

Cases: 58 (30 confirmed, 14 probable, 14 suspected)

Deaths: 27 (8 out of the confirmed cases)

In Wangata (city of Mbandaka) cases increased to 10 (3 separate transmission chains have been identified). Three patients escaped the isolation ward hospital in Mbandaka (2 died outside the hospital, after attending church), sparking fears that disease spread may be more difficult to control.

Given the cases in Mbandaka, the WHO has revised the assessment of public health risk to very high at the national level and high at the regional level. Nine neighbouring countries, including Congo-Brazzaville and Central African Republic, have been advised that they are at high risk of spread, and preparedness activities are being undertaken.

At the global level the risk currently remains low and the WHO decided not to declare it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern for the moment.

<http://www.who.int/csr/don/23-may-2018-ebola-drc/en/>

Vaccination

On Mon 21 May 2018, the Minister of Health, Dr Oly Ilunga Kalenga, officially launched the 1st vaccination campaign in the history of the DRC against Ebola virus disease. The first to be vaccinated with the rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine are healthcare providers directly exposed to confirmed cases. Contacts of confirmed cases will also be vaccinated.

The importance of building community trust to ensure the success of the vaccination campaign has been underlined <http://www.vaccineconfidence.org/>

Treatments

Three experimental treatments are being considered in addition to the vaccine: ZMapp, favipiravir and GS-5734 — that were given to patients during the 2014–16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05205-x>

Funding

The U.S. has raised its contribution from USD 1 million to USD 8 million.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/us-announces-7-million-ebola-congo_us_5b02eed9e4b07309e05ae75f

The World Health Organization estimates it will take at least USD 26 million to quell the current outbreak.