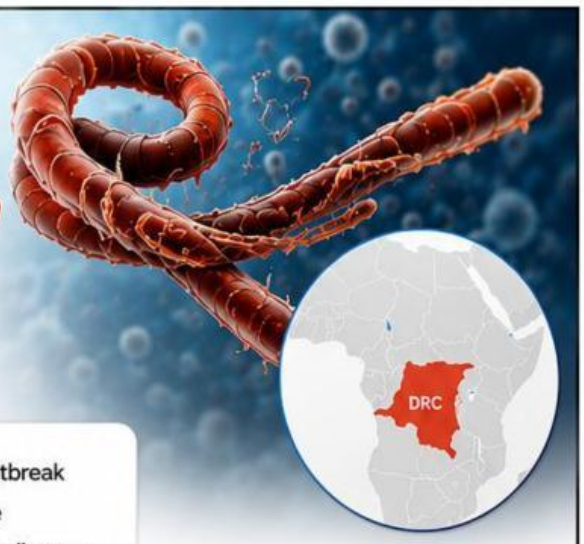
Spread of Ebola in DRC 'outpacing' response efforts, warns WHO

Director general of World Health Organization urges neighbouring countries to take immediate action



The World Health Organization has warned that the Ebola outbreak is outpacing response efforts and countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are at high risk from the disease.

WHO'S WARNING

- "We are urgently scaling up operations, but at the moment the epidemic is outpacing us," said the WHO's director-general, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, as he urged neighbouring countries to take immediate action.
- Addressing an online meeting of the African Union about the outbreak, he also announced there had been 220 suspected deaths so far in the current Ebola outbreak and that he would travel to the DRC on Tuesday with Chikwe Ihekweazu, executive director of WHO's health emergencies programme.

ATTACKS ON HEALTH FACILITIES

- Tedros's announcement came as attacks by residents on health facilities in Ituri province, the centre of the outbreak, hampered the response.
- First on Saturday and again on Sunday, residents of Mongbwalu town in the DRC attacked the Mongbwalu general referral hospital.
- Dr Richard Lokodu, medical director of the facility, told Reuters that 18 Ebola patients had fled on Saturday after "unidentified individuals" burned tents, erected by Médecins Sans Frontières, where patients were being isolated.
- The hospital came under four waves of attacks on Sunday, he added, by young people mobilised by relatives of a religious leader who died of Ebola. Seven other patients escaped and Congolese police and soldiers had to intervene to restore order.
- A suspected patient who was in critical condition with haemorrhaging died in the second attack while trying to flee from his bed.The perpetrators of the attacks had wanted the bodies of the Ebola victims released for burial, Lokodu added.

BURIAL PRACTICES AND RISKS

- In a similar incident, a crowd on Thursday set fire to a treatment centre in Rwampara, near Bunia, after authorities refused to give them the body of a victim they wanted to bury themselves.
- The burial of bodies, which can be highly contagious, is handled by authorities for containment of the disease, but some families prefer traditional burials, which involve washing and touching the body. In previous outbreaks that has been proved to be a key driver of the spread of the disease.

Authorities handle bodies for containment

Traditional burials involve washing and touching the body

OUTBREAK DECLARED A GLOBAL EMERGENCY

- Earlier this month, Tedros declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths were reported in the DRC and two deaths in neighbouring Uganda.
- On Monday, Uganda announced two more Ebola cases, taking the total number of confirmed cases in the country to seven. The new cases are both Ugandan health workers in a private health facility in the capital, Kampala, the country's health ministry said in a statement.

THE VIRUS AND CHALLENGES

- The outbreak is caused by the rare Bundibugyo ebolavirus, which has no approved treatment or vaccine.The hotspots are Rwampara, Mongbwalu, Nyankunde and Bunia areas in the north-east DRC province of Ituri, a commercial and migration hub and a gold-rich region where conflict between militias allied to the Hema and the Lendu ethnic groups, who are fighting over land and the mineral, has killed more than 50,000 people since 1999.
- Cases have also been reported in Butembo and rebel-controlled Goma, both in North Kivu province, and Bukavu city, also rebel-held, in South Kivu province.
- On Monday, Tedros said containing the outbreak was complicated by Ituri and North Kivu being insecure and the lack of an approved vaccine.

ที่มา: Reuters contributed to this report

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ใบกิจกรรมที่ 1 Ebola KWL

Directions:

1. Write what you already knew about Virus Ebola in Column K.
2. Write what you want to know about Virus Ebola in Column W
3. Write what you have learned about Virus Ebola in Column L.

K	W	L
What do I know	What do I want to know	What did I learn

Be informed, Be safe, Be kind.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ใบกิจกรรมที่ 2 : Ebola Mapping

Directions: Complete the mind map using the information from the passage.

Ebola Outbreak in DCR

Current

- .....
- .....
- .....

WHO Warning

- .....
- .....
- .....

Required Action

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ใบกิจกรรมที่ 3
Ebola Summarizing

Directions: Read the paragraph and fill in the blanks with the correct words from the list below.

neighbouring	attacked	deaths	hospital	burial
patients	contagious	spread	vaccine	health
emergency	workers	contain	conflict	

The Ebola _____ (1) _____ in the Democratic Republic of Congo has become a serious problem. The World Health Organization warned that _____ (2) _____ countries are also at high risk. According to reports, there have been many suspected _____ (3) _____ during the epidemic. The situation became worse when residents _____ (4) _____ medical facilities, including a _____ (5) _____ in Mongbwalu town. During the violence, several Ebola _____ (6) _____ escaped from the treatment center.

Many families wanted traditional _____ (7) _____ for Ebola victims, but authorities refused because the bodies could still be highly _____ (8) _____ and increase the _____ (9) _____ of the disease. Therefore, WHO declared Ebola a public health _____ (10) _____ of international concern.

The outbreak has been difficult to control because there is no approved _____ (11) _____ for the Bundibugyo ebolavirus. In addition, many _____ (12) _____ professionals and medical _____ (13) _____ have been trying to help affected communities. However, insecurity and ethnic _____ (14) _____ in some areas have made it harder to _____ (15) _____ the disease.

LIVEWORKSHEETS