



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TO: PORT HEALTH OFFICIALS

ALERT: EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) declared a new outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Bikoro in Equateur Province on 8th May 2018. The outbreak declaration occurred after laboratory results confirmed two cases of EVD. In the past five weeks, there have been 21 suspected viral haemorrhagic fever in and around Ilkoko Iponge, including 17 deaths.

The World Health Organization is working closely with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to rapidly scale up its operations and mobilize health partners using the model of a successful response similar to the EVD outbreak in 2017. This is DRC's ninth outbreak of EVD since the discovery of the virus in the country in 1976. The latest outbreak of the disease comes less than a year after the Central African country's last outbreak, in which 8 people were infected of whom 4 died. Ebola is endemic to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

There is a low risk of transmission to South Africa, however due to the frequent travel between South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Points of Entry are requested to be on the alert and enhance preparedness in order to prevent the importation of EVD and implement response measures in the event that a case is detected in the country:

- Conveyance Operators and crew members must remain vigilant for any travelers with symptoms related to EVD.
- Should a traveler present any symptoms related to EVD, conveyance operators or crew members must take the necessary precautionary measures and immediately report this to the Port Health office in line with requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005).
- Port Health officials must enhance their screening measures (verification of health documentation, interview of crew, scanning for fever etc.) and prioritise all conveyances and travellers arriving from the affected country, including connecting flights.
- Where a suspected case has been identified or Port Health has been alerted of such, standard operating procedures for the management of a suspected case of communicable disease must be implemented.

Ebola virus is transmitted following direct contact with persons infected with the virus through contaminated body fluids including blood, stool, urine, saliva and semen, or with an environment contaminated with body fluids. Symptoms develop 8-10 days after contact and include fever, weakness, myalgia, headache, sore throat,

abdominal pain, rash and bleeding from mucous membranes. Treatment is supportive. Rapid implementation of infection control measures, as soon as the disease is suspected, is essential.

Port Health Officials must bring the contents of this communique to the attention of relevant stakeholders.

Enquiries must be directed to Ms Aneliswa Cele, Tel: 012 395 8522/ email: aneliswa.cele@health.gov.za or Ms Pam Masilela, Tel: 012 395 8520/ email: pam.masilela@health.gov.za.

For more information on Ebola Virus Disease please visit the WHO website: www.who.int.

Yours sincerely



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