

DR Congo to begin Ebola vaccinations this week

6 August 2018

The health authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo said Monday they would begin Ebola vaccinations later this week in the east of the country, where a new outbreak of the virus is believed to have killed 33 people.

"Vaccination begins on Wednesday. The teams are on the ground to identify those who had contact with the confirmed [cases](#), as well as those who had contact with those contacts," health ministry official, Bathe Ndjokolo, told AFP.

"The vaccine stocks that are available in Kinshasa amount to 3,220 doses," the ministry said.

Medical personnel handling the [outbreak](#) would also be vaccinated, it added.

The outbreak in North Kivu in eastern DRC was declared a week after WHO and the Kinshasa government hailed the end of an Ebola flareup in northwestern Equateur province, which also killed 33 people.

No new cases have been reported since Saturday. But as of then, the ministry said there were 43 reported cases and 33 deaths. Of these, 13 cases had been confirmed, three of whom had died.

The North Kivu province is one of the most populated in the DR Congo with eight million inhabitants and it shares borders with Uganda and Rwanda.

But handling the outbreak of the disease there is complicated by security concerns, since foreign and local armed groups are accused by the authorities and the UN's MONUSCO mission of perpetrating serious crimes against the civilian population in the region.

Probable Ebola cases have also been reported in the neighbouring province of Ituri.

One of the world's most feared diseases, Ebola is a virus-caused haemorrhagic fever that in extreme cases causes fatal bleeding from internal organs, the mouth, eyes or ears.

It has a natural host in a species of tropical African fruit bats, from which it is believed to leap to humans who kill and butcher the animals for food.

In the worst outbreak of Ebola, the disease struck the West African states of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2013-15, killing more than 11,300 people.

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