

Ebola vaccinations begin in Congo's latest deadly outbreak

8 August 2018, by Al-Hadji Kudra Maliro And Carley Petesch



Some 36 people have died from hemorrhagic fever amid the outbreak, but officials said many cannot be confirmed as Ebola deaths at this point.

Three thousand doses of the Ebola vaccine are being sent from Kinshasa, the capital, and will be used first in the Mabalako health zone and in the nearby city of Beni, which has more than 680,000 people.

The experimental vaccine was used in an earlier, unrelated outbreak in Congo's northwest that was declared over last month.

A healthcare worker from the World Health Organization gives an Ebola vaccination to a front line aid worker in Mangina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Wednesday, Aug 8, 2018. Health experts began Ebola vaccinations in Congo's northeast village of Mangina for the latest deadly outbreak that has already claimed at least nine lives. (AP Photo/Al-hadji Kudra Maliro)



Ebola vaccinations began Wednesday in Congo's latest outbreak of the deadly virus that has already claimed at least nine lives.

Health officials have warned that containing the outbreak in North Kivu province is complicated by the presence of multiple armed groups vying for mineral-rich land in the northeastern region that borders Uganda and Rwanda. Ebola screening of travelers at the Congo-Rwanda border was "already in high gear," the World Health Organization said.

A healthcare worker from the World Health Organization prepares to give an Ebola vaccination to a front line aid worker in Mangina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Wednesday, Aug 8, 2018. Health experts began Ebola vaccinations in Congo's northeast village of Mangina for the latest deadly outbreak that has already claimed at least nine lives. (AP Photo/Al-hadji Kudra Maliro)

The latest outbreak, declared Aug. 1 in Mangina village in the Mabalako health zone, is Congo's tenth outbreak since the virus was identified in 1976. This outbreak has seen 16 confirmed Ebola cases, 27 probable cases and 46 suspected ones.

The first to be vaccinated are health workers, contacts of confirmed Ebola cases and their contacts in what is called a ring vaccination campaign. The strategy is the same that was used to contain the previous outbreak in Equateur

province, with more than 3,300 people vaccinated.

The first people to be vaccinated on Wednesday included the Beni's region chief doctor and medical staff. Other residents in Beni and Mangina will receive vaccinations Thursday, authorities said.

"I will be very content to receive the vaccination tomorrow," said Solange Mbambu. "When I see the doctors preparing the funerals for those who have died from Ebola, without their family, it gives me goose bumps."

Ebola jumps to humans from animals including bats and monkeys. It can be spread through contact of bodily fluids of someone infected, living or dead. There is no specific treatment, and the virus can be fatal in up to 90 percent of cases, depending on the strain.

Genetic analysis confirmed the virus strain in this latest outbreak is the Zaire one.



A man displays an Ebola information leaflet for residents in Mangina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Wednesday, Aug 8, 2018. Health experts began Ebola vaccinations in Congo's northeast village of Mangina for the latest deadly outbreak that has already claimed at least nine lives. (AP Photo/Al-hadji Kudra Maliro)



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