

National News

Ebola: 127 health workers, contacts put in quarantine

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BY TONNY ABET

The government has said efforts have been intensified to contain the Ebola disease outbreak, with 127 health workers and other contacts of patients traced and isolated.

Information from the Ministry of Health indicates that there were two imported cases of Ebola Bundibugyo Virus Disease in Kampala, with one of the patients currently undergoing treatment at the Ebola isolation and treatment unit in Mulago Hospital. Both cases are from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Mr Alan Kasujja, the executive director of Uganda Media Centre, who is in charge of communications in the Ebola response, in an exclusive interview with the *Daily Monitor*, said no person living in Uganda has tested positive for Ebola.

"The number of people who have been traced and isolated is 127. No one has tested positive. The contacts are mostly health workers who were treating him, and the driver who took them to the hospital. And they have all been traced and they are under quarantine," he said.

Mr Kasujja said the country has put in place preventive measures, including the postponement of Uganda Martyrs' Day celebrations and strengthen-



A patient being transported to hospital. Experts say a person with symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea should seek immediate medical help. PHOTO/FILE

EBOLA PREVENTION TIPS

- Avoid physical contacts with anyone showing the Ebola symptoms
- Practice hand washing maintain good hand hygiene at all times
- Avoid contact with body fluids that include urine, blood, sweat,

- saliva, vomitus, and stool
- seek appropriate health care services immediately when you experience Ebola-like symptoms
- Dead bodies of suspected Ebola patients should be supervised by the health team
- All public places should institute hand washing facilities at their premises.

ing screening at points of entry to contain the disease.

"Nobody living in Uganda has been infected...the Ministry of Health is very experienced in dealing with these outbreaks. Uganda does better than many other more advanced countries around the world as far as managing pandemics is concerned. So, we are confident that we have the right guidelines and expertise in place

to make sure that the disease doesn't spread," he said.

Mr Kasujja said the main focus of the international community should be on the DR Congo and not Uganda.

"We should all be making sure that the focus is on the eastern part of the DR Congo," he said while responding to concerns about health and travel alerts issued by some foreign governments over the Ebola outbreak in

Uganda.

Dr Tanny Musoke Sekikongo, a consultant physician at Mulago Ebola Treatment Unit, explained that it takes between two and 21 days for a person infected with the Ebola Bundibugyo Virus strain to start showing symptoms.

"Initial symptoms can include fever, severe headache, and muscle pains. You'll find the patient so, so tired with extreme fatigue. You'll have reddening of the eyes. Once in a while, one might have diarrhoea, but mild and vomiting, but mild," he said.

"But as the days progress, usually going past four days, then we begin to see other symptoms coming in and with more severity. So, we can have severe sore throats, chest and abdominal pains," he added.

The Ministry of Health appealed to the public to report suspected cases of Ebola through the toll-free line, 0800-100-066 and free SMS to 6767.