

# DREAD, DENIAL AT HEART OF DRC EBOLA OUTBREAK

## MONGBWALU

Unlike other residents of Mongbwalu, a town at the heart of eastern DR Congo's latest devastating Ebola outbreak, Laureine Sakiya believes that the blood-letting virus exists after seeing some of her neighbours die.

Already suspicious of the Congolese state following decades of neglect and conflict, many in the outbreak's epicentre in the northeastern Ituri province are split between criticism of the government's response and denial of the disease's very existence.

Gold-diggers and hawkers criss-cross mineral-rich and conflict-torn Ituri. Mud-covered motorbikes of travelling Congolese are a regular sight in Mongbwalu, some 100km from Uganda and just 200km away from unstable South Sudan.

In the space of several weeks, the outbreak has spread to several provinces nearby and on to Ugandan soil, with the World Health Organisation declaring the epidemic an international emergency.

Of the 339 people suspected to have contracted Ebola in Mongbwalu — where many of the outbreak's first cases were recorded — 88 have died, according to the latest toll from the authorities.

"The authorities need to bring us vaccines," Sakiya, 26, told AFP.

But no vaccine or treatment exists for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola responsible for the vast central



**Dieudonné Sezabo, a health worker, decontaminates the clothing of a motorcycle taxi driver who transported a patient suspected of having Ebola to the Rwampara Hospital in Ituri, DR Congo on Monday**

AFP PHOTO

African country's 17th outbreak of the disease.

Since Kinshasa declared an outbreak on May 15, the illness has caused 204 deaths and 867 suspected cases, according to a toll given over the weekend by the DR Congo's health ministry.

### COFFIN AFFAIR

In the local hospital, a modest building nestled within the hillside town's trees and high grass, healthcare workers are rinsing the floor and walls with a chlorine solution.

All are clad from head to toe in hazard suits with facemasks and goggles, to guard against a disease spread through close physical contact and bodily fluids.

But handwashing is done in plastic buckets — a sign of the inadequate response to an outbreak many fear could be among the worst in the

virus's history.

Local aid groups are on the ground, while medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has loaned Mongbwalu's hospital tents to isolate suspected victims in.

"The epidemic is out of the ordinary," said an MSF coordinator,

Florent Uzzeni, in the main regional city of Bunia.

The official toll was almost certainly an undercount, he said, adding that "the capacities to test people are extremely limited".

Past Ebola outbreaks have sparked violence among locals either wary of the state's response or sceptical of the disease. Some believed that the latest epidemic was of a "mystical malady", a common belief in some remote areas of the DR Congo.

"At the beginning, people believed it was a coffin affair," said Jonathan Imbalapay, a civil society leader in Mongbwalu.

The first suspected case was identified in Bunia. After the man's death, the victim's family brought the body back to Mongbwalu.

But the 80-km journey on the eastern DR Congo's rickety and

bumpy roads damaged the coffin, exposing the Ebola-ridden corpse.

Traditional leaders and some locals wanted to burn the compromised casket. After tests in a provincial laboratory failed to pinpoint Ebola as the source, the disease and accompanying panic were both allowed to spread in Mongbwalu.

It was only when samples arrived at the biomedical research laboratory in the capital Kinshasa — nearly 1,800km away as the crow flies — that the Ebola outbreak was confirmed.

Adam Hussein, a 35-year-old representative for Mongbwalu's traditional faith healers, fretted about Ebola denial and called on everyone to take precautions.

"I worry about those who say this disease is invented," he said.



**SALE OF USED VEHICLES**

Roofings Group is planning to sell the following vehicles on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" as per details below

| Make & Model       | Registration No. | Color  |
|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| TOYOTA RAV 4,      | UAS 227A         | BLUE   |
| NISSAN XTRAIL,     | UAX 752K         | RED    |
| TOYOTA IPSUM,      | UAZ 208S         | PEARL  |
| TRAILER LIDER      | UAW 913D         | SILVER |
| BAJAJ BOXER BM 100 | UDY 329B         | BLUE   |



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
IN THE CHIEF MAGISTRATES COURT OF  
BUGANDA ROAD AT KAMPALA  
CIVIL SUIT NO. KLA-00-CV-C3-5883-2025



G20 FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED —  
PLAINTIFF  
VERSUS  
NAKAMI ESTHER  
MARY KUNIHIRA — DEFENDANT

Summons in Summary Suit on Plaintiff  
TO: NAKAMI ESTHER  
MARY KUNIHIRA

WHEREAS, the above plaintiff has instituted a suit against you under rule 2 of Order XXXVI of the Civil Procedure Rules, for recovery of UGX 1,000,000/- upon the claim set out in the plaint with annexures annexed hereto;



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
IN THE CHIEF MAGISTRATES COURT OF  
BUGANDA ROAD AT KAMPALA



CIVIL SUIT NO. KLA-00-C  
G20 FINANCE COMPANY  
PLAINT  
VERSUS  
MASERUKA  
NAKASANJE IRENE

Summons in Summary Suit  
TO: MASERUKA DEN  
NAKASANJE IRENE

WHEREAS, the above plaintiff has instituted a suit against you under rule 2 of Order XXXVI of the Civil Procedure Rules, for recovery of UGX 1,000,000/- upon the claim set out in the plaint with annexures annexed hereto;