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THAILAND MANDATES 21-DAY EBOLA QUARANTINE FOR DRC, UGANDA ARRIVALS

BANGKOK

**By Vision Reporter
and Agencies**

Thailand yesterday imposed a 21-day quarantine order for people travelling from or having transited through the DR Congo or Uganda, where a deadly Ebola crisis is surging.

The eastern DR Congo is ground zero for an Ebola outbreak, which has sparked an international health alert by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

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.

In neighbouring Uganda, one person has died, with a further six confirmed infected.

Uganda on Monday confirmed two new Ebola Virus



Charles Olaro

Disease infections involving health workers in Kampala, raising the country's total number of confirmed cases to seven, as the health ministry intensifies surveillance and contact tracing operations.

The ministry said the two newly infected patients are Ugandan health workers attached to a private health facility in Kampala and are currently receiving treatment at a designated Ebola isolation and treatment unit.

Director general of health services Prof. Charles Olaro said both patients were identified through ongoing surveillance efforts and that response teams had already started tracing all individuals who may have come into contact with them.

The ministry has not yet disclosed how the newly-infected Kampala health workers were exposed to the virus, but investigations are ongoing as authorities work to prevent further transmission within health facilities and surrounding communities.

Travellers with or without "symptoms of Ebola infection must be quarantined at least 21 days", Thailand's public health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Ebola is a deadly viral disease that spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids. It can cause severe bleeding and organ failure.

Thailand has not reported any Ebola-affected travellers, but there was risk from global population movement, senior public health ministry official Somlerk Jeungsmarn said in the statement.

Those with Ebola symptoms must quarantine at a designated state hospital, while those without symptoms would be required to stay at an unspecified quarantine site, the ministry said.

The WHO has recorded 10 confirmed Ebola deaths and 220 suspected deaths in the DR Congo since mid-May, while also recording a further 900 suspected cases.

The United Nations agency said the true spread of the virus – which experts suspect was circulating under the radar for some time – was probably much wider.

AFP