

'INSECURITY IN DRC IS MAKING IT HARD TO CONTAIN THE OUTBREAK'

KAMPALA

Conflict in DR Congo is complicating efforts to rein in a deadly Ebola outbreak, the World Health Organisation (WHO) chief warned on Wednesday, while Uganda announced it was shutting its border.

The WHO has recorded 10 confirmed and 223 suspected Ebola deaths in DR Congo since the outbreak was declared in mid-May, out of more than 1,000 confirmed and suspected cases.

Its chief fears insecurity in the eastern DR Congo, which has been plagued for three decades by conflict involving a litany of armed groups, is making it extremely difficult to contain the outbreak.

"Eastern DRC now faces a catastrophic collision of disease and conflict with the Ebola outbreak in Ituri province outpacing the response," the UN agency's head, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on X.

No vaccine or treatment exists for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, which is behind DR Congo's 17th recorded outbreak of the disease.

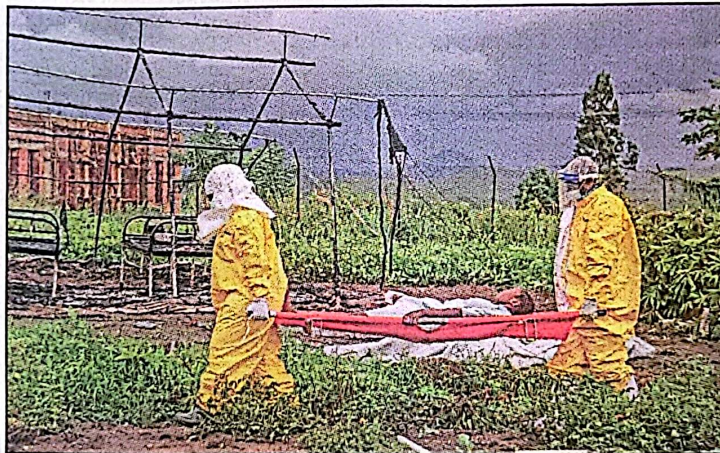
State services in rural Ituri province, where it was first detected, have been largely absent for decades.

In Rwampara, one of the epicentres of the outbreak, AFP saw a symptomatic woman being brought to hospital on a motorbike, squeezed between her sister and the driver.

A health worker recorded a high fever and bleeding from her nose, a common symptom of Ebola, which

WHO WARNS OF 'CATASTROPHIC COLLISION' OF EBOLA, WAR IN DRC

AFP PHOTOS



Medical staff wearing protective gear carry a patient on a stretcher at the hospital in Rwampara, DR Congo on May 21, 2026

causes a haemorrhagic fever.

He rushed to spray chlorine on the bike and driver, who wore a surgical mask, but little else to protect him against a virus that spreads through bodily fluids.

With no ambulances available, "people make do with motorbikes",

the health worker, Dieudonne Sezabo, told AFP.

The hospital has set up a temporary isolation centre, but is still awaiting crucial equipment deliveries.

UGANDA SHUTS BORDER

Neighbouring Uganda, which has

>>WHO said the case fatality rate was under 25%, much lower than in other recent outbreaks.

recorded one death confirmed to be from Ebola and six additional cases, announced it was shutting its border with DR Congo with immediate effect.

It also said it was imposing a 21-day quarantine on anyone arriving from DR Congo, under the supervision of the health ministry and district surveillance teams.

The WHO said the case fatality rate was under 25%, much lower than in other recent outbreaks.

But experts suspect the virus was circulating under the radar for some time and the true extent of the health crisis has yet to be seen.

The WHO chief lamented that clashes were "driving mass displacement, pushing exposed contacts into overcrowded camps and severing critical containment corridors".

"Frontline workers are risking everything, while attacks on health facilities make tracking cases and their contacts nearly impossible," Tedros warned.

"We cannot build community trust or isolate the sick while bombs are falling," Tedros said, urging "all warring parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire to contain this outbreak".

The US plans to open a quarantine centre in Kenya, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, primarily intended for Americans who need to leave DR Congo quickly and quarantine.

Kenya said it had screened some 55,000 people crossing the border from Uganda and had yet to confirm an Ebola case.

AFP