

Intervention. The World Health Organisation has released \$1 million from an emergency contingency fund and set up a coordination group to handle the situation.

BY AFP

DR CONGO. Seventeen people in northwest Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have died from Ebola, the health ministry said on Tuesday, describing the fresh outbreak as a "public health emergency with international impact."

"Twenty-one cases of fever with haemorrhagic indications and 17 deaths" have been recorded in Equateur province, it said, citing a notification to the ministry as of May 3.

It is the DRC's ninth known outbreak of Ebola since 1976, when the deadly viral disease was first identified in then-Zaire by a Belgian-led team.

In Geneva, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said lab tests in the DRC confirmed the presence of Ebola virus in two out of five samples collected from patients.

"WHO is working closely with the government of the DRC to rapidly scale up its operations and mobilise health partners, using the model of a successful response to a similar... outbreak in 2017," it said in a statement.

11,300

Killed. The number of people that lost their lives in the worst ever Ebola outbreak in Southern Guinea in 2013

It said it had released \$1 million (840,000 euros) from an emergency contingency fund, set up a coordination group and deployed more than 50 experts to work with the DRC government and health agencies.

The outbreak occurred in Bikoro, on the shores of Lake Tumba.

All the cases were reported from a clinic at Ilkoko Iponge, located about 30 kilometres (20 miles) from Bikoro, where treatment capacities are limited, the WHO said.

A team of experts from the WHO, Doctors without Borders (DRC)

Ebola kills 17 in DR Congo



Protection. Health workers wear protective gear at a facility treating Ebola cases in DR Congo last year. AFP PHOTO

and Equateur province travelled to Bikoro on Tuesday to beef up coordination and carry out investigations, it said.

Ebola is one of the world's most notorious diseases, being both highly infectious and extremely lethal.

It is caused by a virus that has a natural reservoir in the bat, which does not itself fall ill, but can pass the microbe on to humans who hunt it for "bushmeat".

Signs and symptoms

The virus is handed on by contact with bodily fluids — touching a sick or dead person is a well-known source of infection.

Following an incubation period of between two and 21 days, Ebola develops into a high fever, weakness, intense muscle and joint pain, headaches and a sore throat.

That is often followed by vomiting

and diarrhoea, skin eruptions, kidney and liver failure, and internal and external bleeding.

The worst-ever Ebola outbreak started in December 2013 in southern Guinea before spreading to two neighbouring west African countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

That outbreak killed more than

11,300 people out of nearly 29,000 registered cases, according to WHO estimates, although the real figure is thought to be significantly higher.

More than 99 per cent of victims were in the three West African countries, although cases occurred in other parts of the world, often stirring panic.

CONTROLLING EBOLA VIRUS

Spread. According to the World Health Organisation, Ebola can be fatal and those in close contact with an infected person's body fluids are at high risk of contracting the virus.

Measures. To minimise risks, effective infection control recommendations must be

practised.

Washing hands properly, putting on and removing personal protective equipment safely must be observed.

Avoiding contact with wild animals, such as bats and monkeys, and their meat.

Huge loss as Kenya dam bursts

BY MAGDALENE WAI
Monitor correspondent

KENYA. At least 32 people have been confirmed dead and hundreds of families displaced after the walls of Dam in Solai, Nakuru County, came down on Wednesday night.

Rongai police boss Japheth on Thursday said 32 bodies have recovered, with search and rescue operation ongoing.

There are fears of the toll rising further because "many people" unaccounted for, according to leaders.

Residents told the *Nation* heard an "explosion" before the dam burst, sweeping away of homes in the neighbourhood including those on the expansive inyua Farm, which borders a reservoir.

The 9pm horror renter affected more than 300 families homeless; 2,500 residents were affected.

Property estimated to be worth millions of shillings was also swept away by the raging waters and threatened.

Tens of people, including children, are feared trapped in the area.

Rescue operations by the Kenya Red Cross and Nakuru County management teams are ongoing in the small hours of Thursday.

By 1am, about 40 people were rescued from the mud and debris at local health facilities, Sub-County and Nakuru hospitals.

A senior police officer speaking on condition of anonymity said: "We found 11 bodies buried under mud and debris and these are people who have been escaping but due to the force and speed of the water from the flooded reservoir."

The mega dam