

Massive yellow fever vaccination campaign begins in Congo

August 17 2016, by Carley Petesch



In this file photo taken Thursday July 21, 2016, residents of the Kisenso district of Kinshasa, receive yellow fever vaccines. Dozens of organizations have started a massive emergency vaccination campaign Wednesday Aug. 17, 2016, in Congo against the largest yellow fever outbreak in decades, trying to stop its global spread. Doctors Without Borders and others are joining Congo's government and the World Health Organization in targeting about 10.5 million people over the next 10 days.(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

A massive emergency vaccination campaign began Wednesday in Congo

against the largest yellow fever outbreak in decades, trying to stop its global spread.

Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children and dozens of other groups are joining Congo's government and the World Health Organization in targeting about 10.5 million people over the next 10 days.

They are focusing on Congo's capital, Kinshasa, where only 2 million of more than 10 million people have been fully vaccinated, and the region between Kinshasa and the border with Angola. WHO has said the outbreak began in Angola's capital, Luanda, in February.

Eventually, the new [vaccination campaign](#) aims to reach more than 14 million people in both countries.

The campaign, however, is affected by limited vaccine supplies, forcing groups to use one-fifth the standard dose, which will be effective for only a year.

Save The Children has warned the outbreak could soon spread to the Americas, Asia and Europe and elsewhere in Africa. It has claimed nearly 500 lives in Congo and Angola amid thousands of suspected cases, the aid group said.

Health officials had estimated they would be short millions of doses, according to a recent Associated Press investigation that reported mismanagement in the initial response to the outbreak, including one million doses unaccounted for and delays in supplies.



In this file photo taken Thursday July 21, 2016, residents of the Kisenso district of Kinshasa, line up to receive yellow fever vaccines. Dozens of organizations have started a massive emergency vaccination campaign Wednesday Aug. 17, 2016, in Congo against the largest yellow fever outbreak in decades, trying to stop its global spread. Doctors Without Borders and others are joining Congo's government and the World Health Organization in targeting about 10.5 million people over the next 10 days.(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

"This campaign is an essential step to containing the spread of the [outbreak](#), but vigilance will remain crucial in the upcoming months," said Axelle Ronsse, Doctors Without Borders emergency coordinator.

There is no known cure for the mosquito-spread virus, which is easily prevented with vaccines. Once infected, people often fall ill with fever and muscle pain, but many recover after several days. The more toxic phase includes possible bleeding from the eyes, ears and nose, organ failure and jaundice.

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