

Kenya reassures public after Ebola false alarm

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Kenya sought to reassure the public and foreign visitors on Monday after a suspected Ebola case, which turned out to be negative, was detected near the border with Uganda.

Uganda last week reported three cases of Ebola, two of them fatal, among people who had been to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where an epidemic has been underway since last August.

Kenyan Health Minister Sicily Kariuki said a 36-year-old woman in the western county of Kericho had fallen ill with headache, fever and vomiting, which can also be symptoms of Ebola.

Further examination found she did not have the disease, Kariuki said at a press conference staged at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

"The Rapid Surveillance and Response Team has examined the patient, who is in stable condition, and has confirmed that she does not meet the case definition for Ebola," she said.

"I wish to reassure all Kenyans and our visitors that we do not have any cases of Ebola."

The Ugandan cases were confirmed in a town that is more than 600 kilometres (375 miles) from the border with Kenya.

Kariuki spelt out a list of preventive measures that Kenya had already taken.

They included the installation of thermal cameras at entry points to detect people with high temperatures, as well as isolation units to host suspected cases. More than 250 health ministry workers have been deployed at entry points as part of this strategy.

The minister called on the public to be vigilant, urging anyone with Ebola-like symptoms who had travelled to affected countries to go to the nearest hospital.

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