

DR Congo Ebola survivors play crucial role helping victims of virus

September 20 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

As health agencies battle to stop the spread of the deadly Ebola virus in

eastern DR Congo, some survivors of the disease are playing a crucial role in aiding victims of the worst outbreak in the country's history.

More than 2,100 people have died from Ebola in Democratic Republic of Congo since the [haemorrhagic fever](#) resurfaced in August 2018.

Containment efforts have been hindered by the conflict in the country's east, as well as attacks on [health workers](#) tackling Ebola in a population where mistrust of outsiders and superstition is rife.

That's where survivors come in.

A 35-year-old doctor who identified himself as Maurice, contracted the virus while caring for a patient in July 2018 before the outbreak was officially confirmed.

He then passed the disease to his wife, Esperance.

Both survived and Maurice is now the head of the Ebola survivors association for the response to the outbreak.

Survivors of Ebola become immune to the disease, allowing them to interact with sufferers without [protective clothing](#).

Ebola is contagious and causes patients to often die from dehydration and multiple organ failure.

Viannay Kambale, 31, survived the virus and now works with patients at an Ebola treatment centre, as he has immunity.

Another survivor, Claude Mabowa, lost his mother, a brother and sister to Ebola, according to NGO Alima.

"There are people who approach me, and others are moving away," the 21-year-old said, about peoples' reaction to him in public.

"It bothered me a lot," he told a local Kinshasa radio station.

UN chief Antonio Guterres visited Beni in the country's Ebola-plagued east earlier this month and urged people who might be infected to visit their nearest health centre for a checkup.

"It is worth coming. There are people who might think: 'Well, I'm going to die, why should I go? No, it's not true. Those who come here can be cured. We must transmit this message to everybody. Don't hide your symptoms. Come," he said after meeting Ebola survivors.

The ongoing Ebola outbreak is the second-worst one in history after more than 11,000 people were killed in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2014 and 2016.

© 2019 AFP

Citation: DR Congo Ebola survivors play crucial role helping victims of virus (2019, September 20) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-09-dr-congo-ebola-survivors-crucial.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.