

Ivory Coast's first case of Ebola since 1994 of 'immense concern'

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Ivory Coast's first recorded case of deadly Ebola disease in nearly three decades is of "immense concern", according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Institut Pasteur had confirmed the case after testing samples taken from an 18-year-old Guinean woman, Health Minister Pierre N'Gou Demba told RTI state television late on Saturday.

She had left the city of Labe in Guinea by road, arriving in Ivory Coast on Wednesday, he added.

"This is an isolated and imported case," he said. The patient was being treated in [intensive care](#) in Abidjan.

Ivory Coast already had doses of the vaccine against Ebola, which will be given to anyone who had been in contact with her.

Vaccinations started on Sunday for "target groups", health sources said.

And in a cross-border response, Guinea handed over 5,000 more doses of the vaccine with WHO support, the country's health security agency said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Patrick Achi had chaired an emergency interministerial meeting earlier on Saturday, the minister added.

Appealing for calm, he said the authorities had already activated an emergency plan that included the identification and surveillance of anyone who had come into contact with the patient.

The WHO said it was the first case of Ebola in Ivory Coast since 1994.

Chances of survival

On June 19, the WHO declared an end to a four-month [outbreak](#) of Ebola in Guinea that claimed the lives of 12 people there.

But a statement from WHO Africa on Saturday said: "There is no indication that the current case in Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) is linked to the earlier outbreak in Guinea.

"Further investigation and genomic sequencing will identify the strain and determine if there is a connection between the two outbreaks," the statement added.

"It is of immense concern that this outbreak has been declared in Abidjan, a metropolis of more than four million people," Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO's Africa regional director, said in the statement.

"However, much of the world's expertise in tackling Ebola is here on the continent and Cote d'Ivoire can tap into this experience and bring the response to full speed."

Ebola causes severe fever and, in the worst cases, unstoppable bleeding.

It is transmitted through close contact with [bodily fluids](#), and people who live with or care for patients are most at risk.

In four decades, periodic Ebola outbreaks have killed around 15,000 people, all in Africa.

The fatality rate in past outbreaks has varied between 25 and 90 percent.

But the WHO pointed out: "There is now [effective treatment](#) available and if patients receive treatment early, as well as supportive care, their chances of survival improve significantly."

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