

Iraq Congo fever deaths rise to 12

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Iraq has recorded at least 12 deaths from Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever since the start of the year, health authorities said Tuesday amid efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

"The total number of cases of haemorrhagic fever is 55, including 12 recorded deaths," health ministry spokesman Seif al-Badr told a news conference.

The tick-borne disease, also known as Congo fever, causes severe haemorrhaging, with people usually catching it through contact with the [blood](#) of infected animals, according to the World Health Organization.

The disease has a [fatality rate](#) of between 10 and 40 percent of all cases.

The southern province of Dhi Qar, a centre for breeding cattle and other livestock, has accounted for 29 of the cases and six of the deaths.

The northern province of Kirkuk announced its first death from the disease on Friday.

"We have not yet reached the stage of an epidemic, but the infections are higher than last year," Badr told AFP Tuesday.

"The procedures adopted by the different authorities are not up to par, particularly with regards to unregulated slaughters," he added.

Authorities have launched a crackdown on slaughterhouses suspected of

violating health regulations, and several provinces have banned the entry and exit of livestock.

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