

DR Congo reports new Ebola case in restive east

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Democratic Republic of Congo says it has recorded a new case of Ebola in its violence-wracked east, less than six weeks after an epidemic in the country's northwest was declared over.

A sample from a 46-year-old woman who died on August 15 in the city of Beni in North Kivu province, "tested positive" for Ebola, the health ministry said in a statement published late on Monday.

Genetic sequencing found the case was linked to a previous strain of the virus from 2018 and was not a new variant, it said.

The ministry assured the public that officials were "hard at work on the ground" to respond to the situation.

Around 160 people have been identified as contact cases, it added.

On July 4, the authorities declared the end to an outbreak that lasted nearly three months in the northwestern province of Equateur that had claimed five lives.

"Ebola resurgences are occurring with greater frequency in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is concerning," Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization's regional director for Africa, said.

"However, health authorities in North Kivu have successfully stopped several Ebola flare-ups and building on this expertise will no doubt bring this one under control quickly," Moeti said in a statement on Tuesday.

WHO said there were 1,000 doses of ERVEBO vaccine in the country to help ring-fence the spread, 200 of which will be sent to Beni this week.

Ebola is an often fatal viral haemorrhagic fever. The disease is named after a river in DRC where it was discovered in 1976.

Human transmission is through body fluids, with the main symptoms being fever, vomiting, bleeding and diarrhoea.

The WHO had announced on Saturday that a suspected case of Ebola in the east was being investigated.

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