

DR Congo investigates suspected Ebola case

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Ebola virus particles (red) on a larger cell. Credit: NIAID

The Democratic Republic of Congo is investigating a suspected case of Ebola in its violence-wracked east, the World Health Organization said Saturday, just weeks after the end of a previous epidemic.

The DRC early last month declared its latest Ebola outbreak over, more than two months after the virus re-emerged in the northwestern Equateur province.

There were four confirmed cases and one probable case—all of whom died—in what WHO said was the country's 14th outbreak since the disease was discovered there in 1976.

Now the authorities fear that a 46-year-old woman who died on Monday in the eastern province of North Kivu could have contracted it too.

She was treated in hospital in the town of Beni "initially for other ailments, but subsequently, exhibited symptoms consistent with Ebola virus disease", WHO said in a statement.

Samples have been sent to a lab for testing.

"WHO is already on the ground supporting [health officials](#) to investigate the case and prepare for a possible outbreak," WHO's regional director for Africa Matshidiso Moeti said in a statement.

The government on Saturday urged caution and said a "stock of vaccines" was available in North Kivu.

Ebola is an often fatal viral haemorrhagic fever. The [disease](#) was named after a river in Zaire, as the country was known when it was discovered.

Human transmission is through [body fluids](#), with the main symptoms being fever, vomiting, bleeding and diarrhoea.

The DRC's deadliest epidemic killed 2,280 people in 2020.

WHO said Friday that two existing treatments dramatically reduce

deaths from Ebola.

Over 120 militias roam the DRC's mineral-rich but volatile east, where attacks on civilians are routine.

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