

Tanzania probes mystery illness after five die

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Tanzania has dispatched a team of health experts to investigate a mysterious disease that has claimed the lives of five people, the government said.

The illness was detected in "a total of seven people (with) symptoms including fever, vomiting, bleeding in various body parts and kidney failure", the health ministry said in a statement released late Thursday.

The government has sent a rapid response team to the northwestern region of Kagera which borders Uganda to investigate the "[communicable disease](#)", Tanzania's chief medical officer Tumaini Nagu said in the statement.

"Samples have been taken from the patients and the dead in an effort to identify the source and type of illness," she said, urging the public to remain calm but take precautions to avoid contagion.

The probe follows an Ebola outbreak in Uganda, that lasted nearly four months and claimed the lives of 55 people before the government in January declared an end to it.

Last year, Tanzania identified an outbreak of leptospirosis or "rat fever" which killed three people in the southeastern region of Lindi.

The [bacterial infection](#) is commonly spread through consuming water or food contaminated by infected animal urine.

Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan said at the time that the disease may have been caused by "growing interaction" between humans and wild animals as a result of environmental degradation.

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