

Ebola death toll rises in DR Congo

10 October 2018

The death toll from an Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has risen to 118, authorities have said, with three children among the recent victims.

The outbreak was first detected on August 1, with the health ministry confirming the latest toll on Tuesday and saying seven new cases had been confirmed, six of them in Beni, not far from the Ugandan border.

More than 15,000 people have now been vaccinated against the virus, it said.

This latest outbreak—the 10th in DR Congo since Ebola was first detected there in 1976—emerged in a highly-restive northeastern region home to a clutch of armed groups which lies near the border with Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan.

The authorities in Beni have announced measures to protect health workers from attacks after a number of incidents where response teams were assaulted.

Ebola response teams will be able to "call on [law enforcement officers](#) for safe and dignified collections and burials," the ministry said.

Red Cross volunteers were injured during the burial of a suspected Ebola victim last week.

Traditional healers should also "refer all suspicious cases to the Ebola treatment centre or face... being banned from practising any form of medicine," the ministry said.

In late September, the World Health Organization said it had revised its Ebola risk assessment in DR Congo from high to "very high".

The WHO cited transport links and population movements as potential risk factors, while stressing that the global risk remained low.

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