

Current major event

Ebola Haemorrhagic fever in Uganda: southern Sudan on high alert

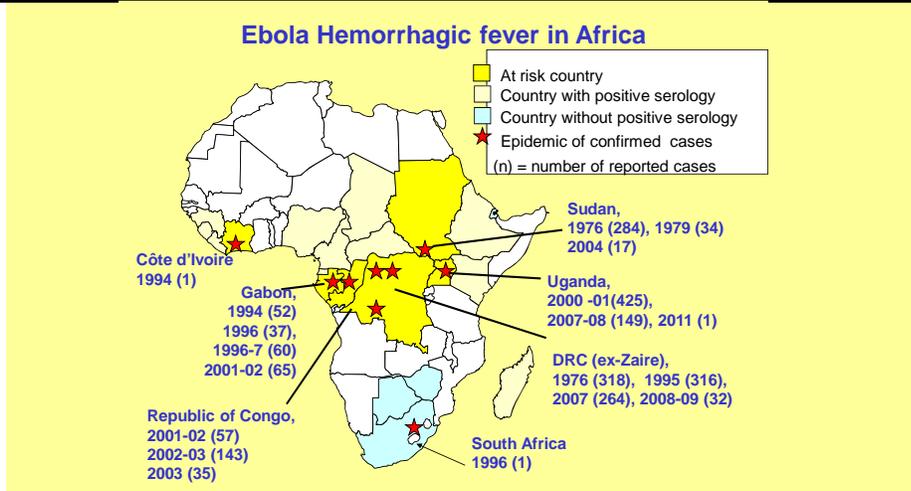
A laboratory-confirmed case of Ebola Haemorrhagic fever (EHF) reported from neighbouring Uganda last week has raised "high alert" for an epidemic threat in southern Sudan. In all the border crossings as well as in the neighbouring districts, the Ministry of Health in South Sudan has enhanced active surveillance for detecting any suspected case of febrile illness with haemorrhagic manifestations.

Editorial note

Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF), caused by Ebola virus, is a severe form of viral haemorrhagic fever which is endemic in regions of central Africa. About 1850 cases with over 1200 deaths have been documented since the Ebola virus was first identified in 1976 in a western equatorial province of southern Sudan. The virus belongs to the Filoviridae family and is composed of five distinct species: Sudan, Zaïre, Côte d'Ivoire, Bundibugyo and Reston. Of these, Zaïre, Sudan and Bundibugyo species have been associated with large EHF outbreaks in Africa (*please see the table*) with high case fatality ratio (25-90%).

Between June and November 1976, Ebola virus infected 284 people in a place called Maridi in southern Sudan causing 151 deaths. Recurrent outbreak of EHF occurred in the same place in southern Sudan in 1979 infecting 34 people and causing 22 deaths. Another outbreak of EHF occurred in southern Sudan in 2004, this time in another county called Yambio. This outbreak was concurrent with an outbreak of measles in the same area and several suspected EHF cases were later reclassified as measles cases.

The health systems and the public health infrastructure in southern Sudan remains fragile owing to protracted conflict. Many parts of southern Sudan including those bordering with Uganda are heavily security compromised. The area has suffered from three outbreaks of EVH in the past. In addition, there is



Major outbreaks of EVH, 1976-2011			
Date	Place	Cases/Deaths	CFR (%)
1976	Sudan	284/151	53
1976	Zaire	318/280	88
1979	Sudan	34/22	65
1994	Gabon	52/31	60
1995	Zaire	315/250	81
1996	Gabon	37/21	57
1996-1997	Gabon	60/45	74
2000-2001	Uganda	425/224	53
2001-2002	Gabon	65/53	82
2001-2002	Republic of Congo	57/43	75
2002-2003	Republic of Congo	143/129	89
2003	Republic of Congo	35/29	83
2004	Sudan	17/7	41
2007	DRC	264/187	71
2007-2008	Uganda	149/37	25
2008-2009	DRC	32/15	47

heavy movements of population between Uganda and southern Sudan through both official and non-official border crossings. Another outbreak from EHF could be very deadly and devastating. It is, therefore, important to remain vigilant and enhance active surveillance for viral haemorrhagic fever especially in the bordering districts.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Measles in Afghanistan; A(H5N1) in Egypt; Chikungunya in Yemen; Cholera in Afghanistan.

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza

Egypt	[144 (487), 33.3%]
Indonesia	[177 (146), 82.4 %]
Viet Nam	[119(59), 49.6 %]
China	[40(26), 65%]
Global total	[554 (324), 58.4%]

Cholera

Haiti	[302401*(5234), 1.7 %]
Chad	[1893 (83), 4.4%]

Ebola Haemorrhagic fever

Uganda	[1(1), 100%]
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Meningococcal disease

Chad	[5536 (249), 4.4 %]#
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Chikungunya fever

Yemen	[15000(104), 0.6 %]#
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Yellow fever

Uganda	[226(53), 23.4 %]
Sierra Leone	[2(0),]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; * Number of hospital visits; # Suspected cases only