

Current major event

Declaration of ending Sudan Ebola virus disease outbreak in Uganda

On 11 January 2023, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Republic of Uganda declared the end of the Sudan Ebola Virus Disease (SUDV) outbreak that affected nine districts. In accordance with WHO recommendations, the declaration was made 42 days (twice the maximum incubation period for Sudan Virus infections) after the last confirmed case was accorded a safe and dignified burial on 29 November 2022.

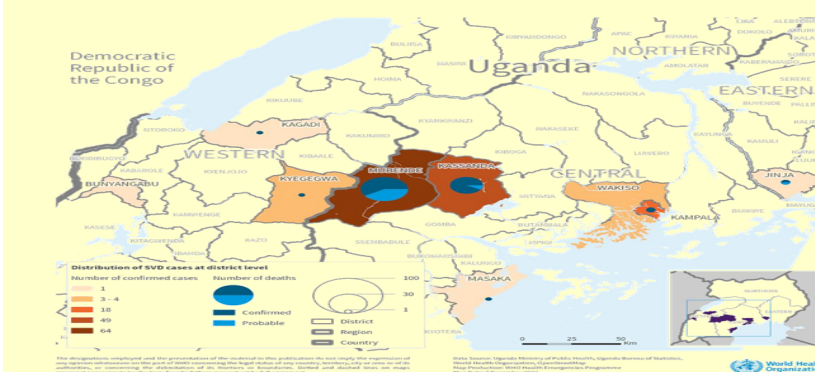
Editorial note

Ebola viruses and Marburg are zoonotic pathogens, members of the Filoviridae family, which cause severe, often fatal illness in humans. Ebola virus disease (EVD) first appeared in 1976 in two simultaneous outbreaks. Since then, regular disease outbreaks have been reported in Africa, each affecting a limited number of people. However, the 2014–2016 outbreak in West Africa was the largest and most complex Ebola outbreak ever, with over 11 000 deaths. The outbreak demonstrated that filoviruses represent a very serious public health threat. Sudan virus was first reported in southern Sudan (former Sudan) in June 1976, since then, the virus has emerged periodically, and up to now, seven outbreaks caused by SUDV have been reported, four in Uganda and three in Sudan. Case fatality rates of the Sudan virus have varied from 41% to 100% in past outbreaks.

On 20 September 2022, Uganda declared an outbreak of Ebola disease caused by SUDV, after a case in Mubende district was confirmed by the Uganda Virus Research Institute. In total, 164 cases (142 confirmed, 22 probable) with 77 deaths (55 among confirmed cases and 22 among probable cases) and 87 recovered patients, were reported. A higher proportion of cases occurred among males (59%), while the most affected age group was represented by those aged 20–29 years (31%), followed by those aged 30–39 years (30%). A quarter of cases were reported among children under 10 years old. Overall, 19 confirmed cases with seven deaths occurred among healthcare workers.

Mubende was the epicentre of the outbreak, accounting for 45% of confirmed cases (64 confirmed and 19 probable), followed by Kassanda with 35% of confirmed cases (49 confirmed and 2 probable), Kampala with 13% of confirmed cases (17 confirmed and 1 probable), Wakiso with 3% of confirmed cases (4 confirmed cases), Kyegegwa with 2% of confirmed cases (3 confirmed cases), Jinja with 1% of confirmed cases (2 confirmed cases), and Bunyangabo, Kagadi and Masaka, which reported one confirmed case each (Table). From 20 September to 10 January 2023, a total of 4793 contacts were listed and 11 025 alerts were reported, of which 8088 (73%) were investigated and 7382 (67%) were validated as suspected cases of Ebola disease caused by SUDV. During this period, 1087 safe and dignified burials (SDB) were undertaken (all suspected deaths had to be tested and accorded a SDB), and 6681 samples were tested for Ebola disease. A total of 314 603 travelers were screened at international points of entry and four suspected cases of SUDV were detected, who all tested negative.

Map of confirmed cases and deaths of Ebola disease caused by SUDV by district, 2022, Uganda



SUDV as 10 January 2023, Uganda

Districts	Confirmed cases	Probable cases/deaths	Death among confirmed cases
Mubende	64	19	28
Kassanda	49	2	21
Kampala	18	1	2
Kyegegwa	4	0	1
Wakiso	3	0	0
Kagadi	1	0	1
Masaka	1	0	1
Bunyangabu	1	0	0
Jinja	1	0	1
Total	142	22	55

Uganda's ministry of health, WHO and other partners initiated response measures to control the outbreak and prevent further spread. The MoH activated the national and district emergency management committees to coordinate the response. 11 experts were deployed to the field and three are still supporting the response through GOARN. Additionally, over USD 27 million were mobilized from donors and partners in cash and in-kind contributions.

Multidisciplinary teams were deployed to the field to actively search and provide care for suspect cases, identify, reach and follow-up contacts, and sensitize communities on the outbreak prevention and control interventions. Partners supported MoH in laboratory and case management through the establishment of screening, triage, isolation and care areas at designated reference hospitals in affected districts. Survivor care program has been established and succeeded to assist the survivors and their families.

WHO supported the implementation of national response activities through the MoH and partners while enhancing coordination. WHO convened an expert meeting to prioritize candidate vaccines for SUDV. In coordination with Ugandan researchers, health authorities, and regulators, a ring vaccination trial protocol was developed and locally approved. Three candidate vaccines were identified and over 5000 doses arrived to the country, with the first batch on 8 December and the last two on 17 December.

This outbreak showed that the re-emergence of SUDV is a major public health concern in Uganda and bordering countries. Strengthening surveillance and laboratory capacities can help to detect future outbreaks and prevent further spread.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern
[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2023

Afghanistan	[207 969 (7852), 3.8%]
Bahrain	[696 614 (1536), 0.2%]
Djibouti	[15 690 (189), 1.2%]
Egypt	[515 580 (24 805), 4.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[7 562 495 (144 724), 1.9%]
Iraq	[2 465 545 (25 375), 1%]
Jordan	[1 746 997 (14 122), 0.8%]
Kuwait	[662 858 (2570), 0.4%]
Lebanon	[1 225 251 (10 760), 0.9%]
Libya	[507 158 (6437), 1.3%]
Morocco	[1 272 056 (16 295), 1.3%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[703 228 (5708), 0.8%]
Oman	[399 154 (4628), 1.2%]
Pakistan	[1 576 069 (30 640), 1.9%]
Qatar	[491 304 (685), 0.1%]
Saudi Arabia	[827 372 (9542), 1.2%]
Somalia	[27 310 (1361), 5%]
Sudan	[63 717 (4998), 7.8%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[57 423 (3163), 5.5%]
Tunisia	[1 150 217 (29 291), 2.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[1 048 020 (2348), 0.2%]
Yemen	[11 945 (2159), 18.1%]