

## Travel Health Information for UN Personnel

### **Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak in Democratic Republic of the Congo**

An outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) has been recently declared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The epicenter of this outbreak is in the north-west part of the country, in the Bikoro area, Equateur province. This is the 9th outbreak in the country, the last one occurring in May 2017. For the latest situation update, please see the [WHO Ebola webpage](#).

Investigations are ongoing to assess the full extent of the outbreak. The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has responded swiftly and is collaborating with the UN system and partners to respond to the outbreak.

Ebola virus disease (also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever) is a rare and deadly disease that periodically causes outbreaks in several African countries. It is spread by direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of a person infected with Ebola virus. It is also spread by contact with contaminated objects or infected animals.

\*Symptoms include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, sore throat, and weakness, followed by diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Skin rash, red eyes, and internal and external bleeding may be seen in some patients. All UN personnel should seek medical care **immediately** if they develop any of the above symptoms during or after travel to any EVD-affected country/area.

The risk for most travelers to the DRC is considered low outside of the Bikoro area, but travelers or residents in DRC could be infected if they come into contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids. Health care workers caring for patients with Ebola and family and friends caring for an infected person are at the highest risk of infection.

Based on currently available information, the WHO currently does not recommend any restriction of travel and trade to the DRC.

Nevertheless, the UN Medical Services Division recommends that all UN personnel travelling to or residing in the DRC and other Ebola-affected areas/countries should review the "[UN Medical Directors' Ebola Prevention Recommendations](#)" information leaflet in order to have awareness about the disease and preventive measures.

There is currently no approved or widely available vaccine, or specific treatment for Ebola, and many people who get the disease die. It is therefore important to take the following key preventive measures to avoid contracting it:

#### **1) Take steps to prevent illness.**

- o Avoid contact with other people's blood or bodily fluids.

- o Do not handle items that may have come in contact with a person's blood or bodily fluids (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment).
- o Avoid contact with animals or raw bush meat.
- o Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling a dead body.
- o Ebola disease is difficult to differentiate from other more common diseases. It is therefore important to ensure that you follow any prophylaxis treatment (cf. malaria) recommended by your UN physician.

## **2) Pay attention to your health during travel and after you leave the EVD-affected country/area.**

- o Monitor your health for fever and other symptoms (see above\*) for 21 days.
  - **Seek medical care immediately** if you have traveled to the affected country/area and have been exposed to bodily fluids and developed symptoms of fever, headache, body aches, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, rash, or red eyes.
- o Tell the doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms **before you go to his or her office or emergency room**. Advance notice will help the doctor care for you and protect other people who may be in the office or hospital.

## **3) If you are a Health Care Worker Travelling into the Outbreak Area**

- Health care workers treating patients with Ebola should apply extra infection control measures including:
  - o Implement standard precautions with all patients, regardless of their diagnosis.
  - o Wear protective clothing, including masks, gloves, gowns, and eye protection
  - o Practice proper infection control and sterilization measures. For more information, see "[Infection Control for Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers in the African Health Care Setting](#)."

For more information, please refer to [WHO's Ebola page](#) and [WHO's fact sheet on Ebola](#). As new information becomes available, the UN Medical Services Division will update this webpage.

### **Vaccination and Malaria Prophylaxis Recommendations**

The UN Medical Directors have developed an overarching Vaccination and Malaria Prophylaxis Recommendations ([English](#) / [French](#)) for all UN personnel travelling on official business. Please be sure to consult this document in preparation regarding your health needs for your upcoming travel.

Please note that these recommendations should be applied according to factors such as an individual's vaccination history, health status, destination(s), trip itinerary, type of travel, length of stay, etc.