

2 more evacuees test positive for hantavirus

The Hague, Netherlands: Nations around the world on Monday repatriated passengers from a cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak and quarantined or isolated them, including a French woman and an American who tested positive.

Passengers from the ship began flying home aboard military and government planes on Sunday after the MV *Hondius* anchored in the Canary Islands. Personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks escorted the travellers from ship to shore in Tenerife, an effort that continued on Monday.

Three cruise ship passengers have died, and there are at least six confirmed hantavirus cases, according to the World Health Organisation. The lab results of the American who



Passengers evacuated from MV *Hondius* at Eppley Airfield in Omaha, Nebraska, US, on Monday.

(Reuters)

tested positive were inconclusive, WHO spokesperson Sarah Tyler said on Monday.

Health authorities say the risk to the broader public is low from the first-ever hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship. While there is no cure or vaccine for hantavirus, the WHO says early detection and treatment improves survival rates.

The French woman tested

positive for hantavirus and her health worsened in the hospital overnight, French health minister Stephanie Rist said on Monday. The woman was among five French passengers repatriated on Sunday. She developed symptoms on the flight to Paris, Rist told public broadcaster France-Inter.

One of 17 American passengers evacuated from the ship and flown to Nebraska also tested positive for the hantavirus but is not showing any symptoms, and another had mild symptoms, US health officials said late on Sunday.

After landing in Nebraska early Monday, the American passengers were being taken to the University of Nebraska Medical Centre, which has a federally funded quarantine facility.