

# Rise in Congo Ebola cases, WHO worried

**Bunia:** The World Health Organisation director-general openly worried on Tuesday over the “scale and speed” of an outbreak of a rare type of Ebola in eastern Congo, where authorities reported a sharp increase in suspected deaths — to at least 134 — and more than 500 suspected cases.

The virus spread undetected for weeks after the first known death as authorities tested for a more common type of Ebola and came up negative, health experts and aid workers said. The Bundibugyo virus has no approved medicines or vaccines.

Congo's health minister, Samuel Roger Kamba, said that investigations were underway to determine whether the deaths and 513 suspected

cases were “actually linked to the disease”.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said he is “deeply concerned about the scale and speed of the epidemic”, adding that the UN health agency will convene its emergency committee later on Tuesday. He pointed to the emergence of cases in urban areas, the deaths of healthcare workers and significant population movement.

## Doctor positive

An American man tested positive for Ebola while working as a medical missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where an outbreak of the deadly virus was first identified, officials said.



**A woman washes her hands in Goma, Congo, on Monday.**  
(Reuters)

The man, Dr Peter Stafford, was exposed to the virus while treating patients at Nyankunde Hospital in Bunia, the main city in the country's Ituri Province. Stafford has worked at the hospital since 2023, Serge, the international Christian missions organisa-

tion where he works, said in a news release.

On Monday, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order suspending entry into the US for 30 days for travellers who do not have a US passport and have recently travelled to Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. Cases have been confirmed in Congo and Uganda, according to the agency.

The CDC had also announced on Monday that an American working in Congo had tested positive for the virus on Sunday after developing Ebola symptoms over the weekend but did not identify him. Serge later announced Stafford's case.

The US government is

working to move the American who tested positive and other “high-risk contacts” to Germany for treatment and monitoring because of that country's past experience treating Ebola patients and its proximity to Africa, said Dr Satish Pillai, the CDC's Ebola response incident manager.

The CDC had previously said that officials were working to withdraw a small number of Americans who have been directly affected by the outbreak in Congo and Uganda.

Pillai emphasised on Monday that the risk to the US was low, and that there were no confirmed cases in the country.

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