EU Threats

On 31 December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health and Health Commission reported a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology with a common source of exposure at Wuhan’s South China Seafood City market. Further investigations identified a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of respiratory symptoms for these cases. The outbreak rapidly evolved, affecting other parts of China and other countries worldwide. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared that the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), accepting the Committee's advice and issuing temporary recommendations under the International Health Regulations (IHR). On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meetings for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, 14 January 2021, 15 April 2021 and 14 July 2021, respectively. The Committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – Multi-country (World) – 2019 - 2021

Opening date: 7 January 2020   Latest update: 29 October 2021

On 31 December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health and Health Commission reported a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology with a common source of exposure at Wuhan's South China Seafood City market. Further investigations identified a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of respiratory symptoms for these cases. The outbreak rapidly evolved, affecting other parts of China and other countries worldwide. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared that the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), accepting the Committee’s advice and issuing temporary recommendations under the International Health Regulations (IHR). On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meetings for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, 14 January 2021, 15 April 2021 and 14 July 2021, respectively. The Committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

Update of the week

Since week 41 2021 and as of week 42 2021, 2,848,127 new cases of COVID-19 and 46,913 new deaths have been reported worldwide.

Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 42 2021, 2,441,160 cases of COVID-19 have been reported worldwide, including 495,765 deaths.

In the EU/EEA, as of week 42 2021, 39,693,819 cases have been reported, including 793,581 deaths.

The figures reported worldwide and in the EU/EEA are probably an underestimate of the true number of cases and deaths, due to various degrees of under-ascertainment and under-reporting.

The latest daily situation update for the EU/EEA is available here.
During the transmission season for West Nile virus (WNV), which usually runs from June to November, ECDC monitors the occurrence of infections in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA), and EU-neighbouring countries. ECDC publishes weekly epidemiological updates to inform blood safety authorities. Data reported through The European Surveillance System (TESSy) are presented at the NUTS 3 (nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) level for EU/EEA Member States and at the GAUL 1 (global administrative unit layers 1) level for EU-neighbouring countries.

Update of the week
Between 22 and 28 October 2021, European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries reported human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) infection and no deaths. The case was reported by Greece (1). EU-neighbouring countries reported no human cases and no deaths related to WNV infections.

Non EU Threats

Influenza – Multi-country – Monitoring 2021/2022 season
Reported influenza activity in Europe remains at interseasonal levels.

Update of the week
Week 42 2021 (18-24 October 2021)

Influenza activity was low throughout the European Region, where influenza viruses were detected sporadically in specimens from persons with respiratory illness presenting to medical care.

Both influenza A and B type viruses were detected, with A(H3) subtype predominating. Type A virus infection was reported for two patients in intensive care units. Twelve patients with SARI in hospital settings were infected with A(H3) viruses.

Croatia and Kyrgyzstan experienced early influenza activity related to A(H3) circulation.

Chikungunya and dengue – Multi-country (World) – Monitoring global outbreaks
Chikungunya virus disease and dengue are vector-borne diseases transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes. Outbreaks of dengue and chikungunya virus diseases have been reported globally in the Americas, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Europe. Chikungunya virus disease and dengue are not endemic in mainland Europe, despite autochthonous outbreaks having been reported during the summer and autumn months in recent years.

Update of the week
Chikungunya virus disease: In 2021, 185 349 cases have been reported, the majority from Brazil (114 858) and India (65 203). Since the previous CDTR published on week 39, 51 473 new cases have been reported, the majority from India (40 037) and Brazil (11 233).

Dengue: In 2021, 1 316 518 cases have been reported, the majority from Brazil (845 720), India (60 112), Vietnam (53 489), Peru (37 728) and Philippines (32 555). Since the previous CDTR published on week 39, 133 797 new cases have been reported, the majority from India (46 068), Brazil (31 839), Pakistan (22 603), Colombia (5 710) and Vietnam (5 233).
On 8 October 2021, the Ministry of Health for the Democratic Republic of Congo announced a new laboratory-confirmed case of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Butsili Health Area in Beni Health Zone, North Kivu Province. This Health Area is about 50km from Butembo city, where the DRC’s 12th EVD outbreak occurred in 2021, lasting for around three months until it was declared over on 3 May 2021. The city of Beni is a commercial hub with links to the neighbouring countries of Uganda and Rwanda.

Update of the week
One new confirmed and fatal case of EVD was reported by WHO. WHO raised the number of identified contacts to 589 and the number of monitored contacts to 517.
II. Detailed reports

COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – Multi-country (World) – 2019 - 2021

Opening date: 7 January 2020  Latest update: 29 October 2021

Epidemiological summary

Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 42 2021, 244 116 050 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including 4 955 765 deaths.

Cases have been reported from:

Africa: 8 468 345 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are South Africa (2 919 632), Morocco (944 277), Tunisia (711 693), Ethiopia (362 335) and Libya (353 626).

Asia: 69 305 855 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are India (34 189 774), Iran (5 851 670), Indonesia (4 239 396), Philippines (2 756 923) and Malaysia (2 431 716).

America: 93 120 479 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are United States (45 444 816), Brazil (21 729 763), Argentina (5 281 585), Colombia (4 992 586) and Mexico (3 767 758).

Europe: 72 902 329 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are United Kingdom (8 773 674), Russia (8 241 643), Turkey (7 827 013), France (7 115 118) and Spain (5 003 034).

Oceania: 318 337 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are Australia (158 547), Fiji (52 028), French Polynesia (45 506), Papua New Guinea (27 695) and Guam (17 671).

Other: 705 cases have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

Deaths have been reported from:

Africa: 216 840 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are South Africa (88 925), Tunisia (25 149), Egypt (18 285), Morocco (14 612) and Ethiopia (6 358).

Asia: 1 072 213 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are India (454 712), Indonesia (143 176), Iran (125 052), Philippines (41 793) and Malaysia (28 400).

America: 2 282 980 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are United States (735 941), Brazil (605 644), Mexico (285 347), Peru (200 083) and Colombia (127 099).

Europe: 1 379 920 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are Russia (230 600), United Kingdom (139 533), Italy (132 287), France (121 443) and Germany (94 627).

Oceania: 3 806 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are Australia (1 637), Fiji (673), French Polynesia (635), Papua New Guinea (335) and New Caledonia (261).

Other: Six deaths have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

EU/EEA:

As of week 42 2021, 39 911 434 cases have been reported in the EU/EEA: France (7 115 118), Spain (5 003 034), Italy (4 742 131), Germany (4 463 052), Poland (2 947 649), Netherlands (2 082 499), Czechia (1 731 227), Romania (1 563 657), Belgium (1 311 728), Sweden (1 167 386), Portugal (1 085 448), Hungary (850 594), Slovakia (806 264), Austria (796 407), Greece (718 164), Bulgaria (578 285), Croatia (449 034), Ireland (431 689), Lithuania (377 425), Denmark (371 728), Slovenia (320 620), Latvia (202 571), Norway (200 940), Estonia (183 333), Finland (152 713), Cyprus (122 537), Luxembourg (81 784), Malta (37 742), Iceland (13 130) and Liechtenstein (3 545).

As of week 42 2021, 794 808 deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA: Italy (132 287), France (121 443), Germany (94 627), Spain (87 168), Poland (76 447), Romania (44 980), Czechia (30 565), Hungary (29 381), Belgium (25 627), Bulgaria (23 964), Netherlands (18 336), Portugal (18 135), Greece (15 666), Sweden (14 999), Slovakia (12 917), Austria (10 973), Croatia (9 060), Lithuania (5 693), Ireland (5 131), Slovenia (5 023), Latvia (3 360), Denmark (2 699), Finland (1 566), Estonia (1 445), Norway (1 133), Luxembourg (897), Cyprus (693), Malta (499), Liechtenstein (61) and Iceland (35).

The latest daily situation update for the EU/EEA is available here.

In week 42 2021, in the EU/EEA overall, the reported weekly cases increased by 29.3% compared to the previous week. The highest weekly increases in descending order were observed in Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Denmark. The countries with the highest 14-day notification rates per 100 000 population are: Latvia (1 641), Estonia (1 353), Lithuania (1 320), Romania (1 061) and Slovenia (905). Six of the 30 EU/EEA countries (Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Finland, Belgium and Italy) reported a decrease
in the weekly cases.

ECDC’s assessment of each country’s epidemiological situation is based on a composite score based on the absolute value and trend of five COVID-19 epidemiological indicators assessed weekly. As shown below, for week 42, four countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were categorised as of very high concern, 12 countries (Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) as of high concern, 10 countries (Austria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Portugal) as of moderate concern, two countries (Italy and Sweden) as of low concern and two countries (Malta and Spain) as of very low concern. Compared with the previous week, eight countries (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal) moved to a higher category, four countries (Croatia, Malta, Romania and Spain) moved to a lower category and 18 countries stayed in the same category.

For the latest COVID-19 country overviews, please see the dedicated webpage.

Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC):
On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 constitutes a PHEIC. On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meetings for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, 14 January 2021, 15 April 2021, 4 July 2021 and 22 October 2021 respectively. The Committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

ECDC assessment
For the most recent risk assessment, please visit ECDC’s dedicated webpage.

Actions
On 30 September 2021, ECDC published the rapid risk assessment, ‘Assessing SARS-CoV-2 circulation, variants of concern, non-pharmaceutical interventions and vaccine rollout in the EU/EEA’. A dashboard with the latest updates is available on ECDC’s website.
West Nile virus - Multi-country (World) - Monitoring season 2021
Opening date: 4 June 2021  Latest update: 29 October 2021

Epidemiological summary

Between 22 and 28 October 2021, European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries reported one human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) infection and no deaths related to WNV infection. The case was reported by Greece (1). EU-neighbouring countries reported no human cases and no deaths related to WNV infection.

Since the beginning of the 2021 transmission season and as of 28 October 2021, EU/EEA countries have reported 136 human cases of WNV infection in Greece (56), Italy (54), Hungary (7), Romania (7), Spain (6), Austria (3) and Germany (3), and nine deaths in Greece (7), Spain (1) and Romania (1). EU-neighbouring countries have reported 18 human cases of WNV infection in Serbia (18) and three deaths in Serbia (3).

During the current transmission season, within the reporting countries, human cases of WNV infection were reported from 45 different NUTS 3 or GAUL 1 regions, of which the following regions reported human cases of WNV infection for the first time:
Spree-Neiße in Germany and La Spezia in Italy.

Since the beginning of the 2021 transmission season, 34 outbreaks among equids and eight outbreaks among birds have been reported by EU/EEA countries. Outbreaks among equids have been reported by Germany (15), Spain (10), Portugal (4), Hungary (3), Greece (1) and France (1). Outbreaks among birds have been reported by Spain (7) and Slovenia (1).

**ECDC assessment**

Human WNV infections have been reported in seven EU Member States where seasonal circulation of the virus has been previously reported. According to the data from previous years and the epidemiology of WNV infections, the number of new infections are expected to decrease during this period of the year. However, further cases are very likely to be reported to ECDC in the coming weeks due to reporting delays.

In accordance with [Commission Directive 2014/110/EU](https://ec.europa.eu/health/system/files/documents/2014/110-2014-directive.pdf), prospective blood donors should be deferred for 28 days after leaving a risk area for locally acquired WNV infection, unless the result of an individual nucleic acid test is negative.

**Actions**

During transmission seasons ECDC publishes a set of [WNV transmission maps, a dashboard, and an epidemiological summary](http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/western-nile-virus-outbreaks) every Friday.

**Distribution of human West Nile virus infections by affected areas as of 28.10.**

![Map of human West Nile virus infections by affected areas as of 28.10.](image-url)
Distribution of West Nile virus infections among humans and outbreaks among equids and/or birds in the EU as of 28.10.

**Influenza – Multi-country – Monitoring 2021/2022 season**

Opening date: 15 October 2021  
Latest update: 29 October 2021

**Epidemiological summary**

**2021/2022 season overview**

For the European Region as a whole, influenza activity has been at baseline level with sporadic detections, mostly of A(H3) viruses. During the influenza Vaccine Composition Meeting for the southern hemisphere 2022 season, held in September 2021, WHO recommended the replacement of the A(H3N2) and the B/Victoria-lineage component. The full report can be found [here](#).

**Sources:** EuroMOMO | Flu News Europe | Influenzanet

**ECDC assessment**

Reported influenza activity remains at a very low level.

**Actions**

ECDC and WHO monitor influenza activity in the WHO European Region. Data will be updated on a weekly basis until the end of the regular influenza season (week 20 data) and on a monthly basis during the interseason period. The data are available on the [Flu News Europe](#) website.

**Chikungunya and dengue – Multi-country (World) – Monitoring global outbreaks**

Opening date: 27 January 2017  
Latest update: 29 October 2021
Epidemiological summary

**Europe**

**Chikungunya virus disease:** No autochthonous cases of chikungunya virus disease have been detected in Europe in 2021.

**Dengue:**
- **France:** In 2021 and as of 29 October 2021, one autochthonous confirmed case has been reported.

**Americas and the Caribbean**

**Chikungunya virus disease:**
- **Belize:** In 2021 and as of 29 May 2021, 737 cases have been reported.
- **Bolivia:** In 2021 and as of 16 October 2021, 338 cases have been reported, including 38 confirmed cases. This is an increase of 28 new cases, including five new confirmed cases since 11 September 2021.
- **Brazil:** In 2021 and as of 25 September 2021, 114,858 cases have been reported, including 54,860 confirmed cases and eight deaths. This is an increase of 11,233 new cases, including 8,028 new confirmed cases and two new deaths since 21 August 2021.
- **Colombia:** In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, 45 cases have been reported.
- **Costa Rica:** In 2021 and as of 2 October 2021, 24 cases have been reported.
- **El Salvador:** In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, 91 cases have been reported. This is an increase of nine new cases since 11 September 2021.
- **Guatemala:** In 2021 and as of 24 July 2021, 1,091 cases have been reported.
- **Mexico:** In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, four confirmed cases have been reported. This is an increase of one new confirmed case since 11 September 2021.
- **Nicaragua:** In 2021 and as of 16 October 2021, 10 cases have been reported, including one confirmed case. This is an increase of one new case since 18 September 2021.
- **Paraguay:** In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, 116 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 14 new cases since 11 September 2021.
- **Peru:** In 2021 and as of 16 October 2021, 653 cases have been reported, including 393 confirmed cases.
- **Saint Lucia:** In 2021 and as of 16 October 2021, one confirmed case has been reported.
- **Venezuela:** In 2021 and as of 28 August 2021, 50 cases have been reported.

**Dengue:**
- In 2021, and as of 18 September, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 1,038,213 dengue cases, including 440,571 confirmed cases and 299 associated deaths, in the Americas. The five countries reporting most cases are: Brazil (845,720), Peru (37,728), Colombia (31,098), Nicaragua (31,002), and Mexico (24,199). This is an increase of 51,748 cases and 34 deaths since 18 September 2021.

All four dengue virus serotypes (DENV 1, DENV 2, DENV 3, and DENV 4) are currently circulating in the Americas, which increases the risk of severe disease. The figures for each country of the Americas region can be found on the PAHO Health Information Platform.

Dengue fever surveillance indicators are at low levels or even zero in the French Antilles (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy). Martinique and Guadeloupe officially declared the end of the dengue epidemics in these two French departments on 29 April and 20 May 2021, respectively.

**Asia**
Chikungunya virus disease:
Cambodia: In 2021 and as of 9 June 2021, 514 cases have been reported.
India: In 2021 and as of 30 September 2021, 65 203 cases have been reported, including 7 052 confirmed cases. This is an increase of 40 037 new cases, including 4 288 new confirmed cases since 31 July 2021.
Malaysia: In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, 1 102 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 134 new cases since 11 September 2021.
Thailand: In 2021 and as of 1 August 2021, 408 cases have been reported.

Dengue:
Bangladesh: In 2021 and as of 10 October 2021, 20 129 cases have been reported, including 76 deaths. This is an increase of 2 772 new cases and 15 new deaths since 26 September 2021.
Cambodia: In 2021 and as of 26 September 2021, 1 257 cases have been reported, including three deaths. This is an increase of 83 new cases since 11 September 2021.
China: In 2021 and as of 31 August 2021, 30 cases have been reported. This is an increase of six new cases since 12 August 2021.
India: In 2021 and as of 30 September 2021, 60 112 cases have been reported, including 30 deaths. This is an increase of 46 068 new cases and 26 new deaths since 19 August 2021.
Laos: In 2021 and as of 10 October 2021, 1 150 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 161 new cases since 11 September 2021.
Malaysia: In 2021 and as of 9 October 2021, 20 376 cases have been reported, including 14 deaths. This is an increase of 1 388 new cases and three new deaths since 18 September 2021.
Nepal: In 2021 and as of 17 October 2021, 255 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 105 new cases since 11 September 2021.
Pakistan: In 2021 and as of 27 October 2021, 25 478 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 22 603 new cases since 21 August 2021. Dengue is endemic in Pakistan, but this year a rise in cases has been seen; the epidemic has been affecting cities more than usual, including Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, putting pressure on public and private hospitals.
Philippines: In 2021 and as of 3 July 2021, 32 555 cases have been reported, including 119 deaths.
Singapore: In 2021 and as of 17 October 2021, 4 576 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 298 new cases since 25 September 2021.
Sri Lanka: In 2021 and as of 22 October 2021, 14 274 cases have been reported. This is an increase of 1 438 new cases since 28 September 2021.
Thailand: In 2021 and as of 31 August 2021, 5 815 cases have been reported, including six deaths.
Vietnam: In 2021 and as of 10 October 2021, 53 489 cases have been reported, including 20 deaths. This is an increase of 5 233 new cases and two new deaths since 12 September 2021.
Yemen: In 2021 and as of 31 August 2021, 5 224 cases have been reported.

Africa

Chikungunya virus disease:
Democratic Republic of Congo: In 2021 and as of 28 March 2021, 104 cases have been reported.

Dengue:
Angola: In 2021 and as of 11 June 2021, 86 cases have been reported, including 38 confirmed cases.
Côte d'Ivoire: In 2021 and as of 14 September 2021, one case has been reported.

Ethiopia: In 2021 and as of 4 February 2021, 207 cases have been reported.

Kenya: In 2021 and as of 26 August 2021, 976 cases have been reported, including 36 confirmed cases and two deaths.

Réunion: In 2021 and as of 26 September 2021, 29 655 cases have been reported, including 29 655 confirmed cases and 20 deaths. This is an increase of 37 new cases since 21 August 2021.

Senegal: In 2021 and as of 23 October 2021, 47 cases have been reported.

Australia and the Pacific

Chikungunya virus disease:
No cases of chikungunya virus disease have been reported in Australia and the Pacific in 2021.

Dengue:

Australia: In 2021 and as of 26 September 2021, three cases have been reported. This is an increase of one new case since 29 August 2021.

Cook Islands: In 2021 and as of 11 July 2021, 217 cases have been reported.

Fiji: In 2021 and as of 7 February 2021, according to media, 300 cases have been reported.

French Polynesia: In 2021 and as of 10 October 2021, 20 cases have been reported, including one confirmed case.

Marshall Islands: In 2021 and as of 14 March 2021, 12 cases have been reported.

New Caledonia: In 2021 and as of 31 August 2021, 22 cases have been reported, including 22 confirmed cases.

Vanuatu: In 2021 and as of 31 August 2021, 22 cases have been reported, including 22 confirmed cases.

Wallis and Futuna: In 2021 and as of 28 September 2021, 68 confirmed cases have been reported.

N.B: The data presented in this report originate from several sources, both official public health authorities and non-official sources such as news media. Data completeness depends on the availability of reports from surveillance systems and their accuracy, which varies between countries. All data should be interpreted with caution as there may be areas of under-reporting; reported figures may not reflect the actual epidemiological situation. Please note that case definitions may differ between countries and comparisons should be made with caution.

ECDC assessment
Chikungunya virus disease and dengue affect most countries in the tropics and sub-tropics. EU/EEA citizens travelling to the affected areas should apply personal protective measures against mosquito bites.

The likelihood for onward transmission of dengue and chikungunya virus disease in mainland EU/EEA is, among other things, linked to importation of the virus by viraemic travellers into receptive areas with established and active competent vectors (i.e. *Aedes albopictus*). *Aedes albopictus* is established in a large part of mainland Europe. The current likelihood of occurrence of local transmission events of chikungunya and dengue viruses in mainland EU/EEA is moderate, as the environmental conditions are becoming less favourable to the growth of mosquito populations and virus replication in the vector. In the coming weeks, the likelihood of transmission is expected to rapidly decrease. To date, all autochthonous outbreaks of chikungunya virus disease and dengue in mainland EU/EEA have occurred between July and November.

More information is available on ECDC’s dedicated webpage on autochthonous transmission of chikungunya and dengue virus in the EU/EEA, as well as on ECDC’s dengue and chikungunya factsheets.

Actions
ECDC monitors these threats through its epidemic intelligence activities and reports on a monthly basis. A summary of the worldwide overview of dengue and chikungunya virus disease is available on ECDC’s website.
Geographical distribution of chikungunya virus disease cases reported worldwide, August to October 2021

Geographical distribution of chikungunya virus disease cases reported worldwide, January to October 2021
Geographical distribution of dengue cases reported worldwide, August to October 2021

Geographical distribution of dengue cases reported worldwide, January to October 2021

Ebola - Democratic Republic of the Congo - 2021
Opening date: 14 October 2021
Latest update: 29 October 2021
Epidemiological summary

Since the start of the outbreak (on 8 October 2021) and as of 25 October 2021, nine EVD cases (six confirmed and three probable), including seven deaths (four among confirmed cases), have been reported in the North Kivu province in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Initial genomic sequencing at INRB Pathogen Genomic Sequencing laboratory in Kinshasa indicates that the new cases likely represent a flare-up event from the 2018-2020 North Kivu/Ituri outbreak. On 8 October 2021, the Ministry of Health for the Democratic Republic of Congo announced a new laboratory-confirmed case of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Butsili Health Area in Beni Health Zone, North Kivu Province.

The index case was a three-year-old male who developed symptoms of EVD in early October 2021. He died on 6 October. On 7 October, samples were tested at the National Institute of Biomedical Research (INRB) laboratory in Beni. On 8 October, laboratory samples were sent to the Rodolphe Mérieux INRB Laboratory, Goma, and EVD was confirmed by RT-PCR the same day.

Three neighbours of the case (a father and two children) had died on 14, 19 and 29 September 2021 after developing symptoms consistent with Ebola. However, none were tested for EVD. No samples were taken for EVD testing. No specific precautions were taken during the burial ceremonies. Malaria, EVD, measles and meningitis were retrospectively listed as potential causes of death.

On 14 October 2021, a second confirmed case of EVD in a 42-year-old female in Beni Health Zone, North Kivu Province was reported and on 18 October, three new confirmed cases of EVD were reported by WHO AFRO (a 32-year-old female, a 41-year-old male and a three-year-old female). The three-year-old female died on 16 October.

WHO AFRO raised the number of identified contacts to 589 and the number of monitored contacts to 517.

About 1 000 doses of the rVSV-ZEBOV Ebola vaccine and other medical supplies were delivered to Goma city in North Kivu Province, and around 200 doses have been sent onward to Beni city. Vaccinations have started in Beni Health Zone using the ‘ring vaccination’ approach, where contacts and contacts of contacts are vaccinated.

Source: WHO DRC, WHO AFRO, WHO HQ, Blog, Media

ECDC assessment

This is the second outbreak reported in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, in 2021 since the tenth outbreak was declared over in June 2020 (see the Threat Assessment Brief published on 22 February 2021 for more information). Despite the health authorities in the DRC having extensive experience in responding to EVD outbreaks, the ongoing outbreak may spread to other areas within the DRC and/or to neighbouring countries. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other ongoing outbreaks (such as malaria and meningitis) might further challenge the response operations.

The age distribution of these EVD cases is unusual, as half of them are children. Investigations are ongoing to identify the source of the outbreak.

Overall, the current risk for EU/EEA citizens living in or travelling to Beni Health Zone in the DRC is estimated to be low. Although disease in unvaccinated people is severe and most EU/EEA citizens are not commonly vaccinated against the disease, there is a very low likelihood of infection of EU/EEA citizens in the DRC. The current risk for citizens in the EU/EEA is considered very low, as the likelihood of introduction and secondary transmission within the EU/EEA is very low.

Actions

ECDC is following the situation through Epidemic Intelligence. ECDC published the threat assessment brief (TAB) Outbreak of Ebola virus disease in North Kivu, DRC on 22 February 2021, where options for response measures are described.
The Communicable Disease Threat Report may include unconfirmed information which may later prove to be unsubstantiated.