



# ASEAN BIODIASPORA VIRTUAL CENTER

## DISEASE ALERT



February 14, 2025 | Issue No. 11

### First alert: February 14, 2025 | **Unknown Illness in Democratic Republic of the Congo**

#### Sub-Locations Affected

Province de l'Equateur (Basankusu and Boyenge)

#### Event Description

On January 27, 2025, health officials in Bolomba health zone reported 12 cases including eight deaths attributed to an unknown illness amongst an indigenous population in the Boyenge locality. On February 12, 2025, another outbreak was reported in Basankusu, causing over 50 deaths.



*Map of Province de l'Equateur (Boyenge and Basankusu Village), Democratic Republic of the Congo*

#### Epidemiological Information

- On January 27, 2025, Boyenge health area, Bolomba health zone, reported at least 12 cases of unknown illness, including eight deaths occurred between January 10 to 22, with samples sent to Mbandaka for testing. Indigenous populations are reportedly the most affected.
- On February 12, 2025, an unknown disease caused more than 50 deaths in the Bansakusu region, 36 of which were reported between 3 and 9 February in the epicenter, the locality of Bomate. The disease is characterized by hemorrhagic fever, headache and generalized joint pain, and is fatal within 24 hours.
- The situation is described as a "serious health and humanitarian tragedy," emphasizing that local health services lack the resources to manage the outbreak.

- More than 2,000 residents fled to Basankusu and nearby villages for shelter as the situation overwhelmed the capacity of the local administration and health system. This prompted calls for government intervention and adherence to preventive measures.

## Disease Information

**Possible Causes:** The combination of symptoms and a high fatality rate raises suspicions of a viral hemorrhagic fever, such as Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa fever. However, laboratory confirmation is still pending.

**Transmission:** The swift disease progression and case clustering indicate potential person-to-person spread, though this remains unverified.

**Case Fatality Rate:** The exact fatality rate remains undetermined but seems significant, considering the number of deaths in a relatively small population (~5,000 people).

## Response Measure

- Local authorities are facing significant challenges in responding to the outbreak, including limited resources, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and the potential for the disease to spread to other regions.
- The senator has alerted national authorities, emphasizing that the situation surpasses local capacities and necessitates immediate governmental support.
- Public is urged to adhere to preventive protocols to curb the disease's spread.

## Sources:

1. BlueDot. (Event Alert), issued on February 14, 2025.
2. All Africa. (2025, February 13). Congo-Kinshasa: Equateur - Plus de 50 morts dues à une maladie inconnue en quelques semaines à Bansakusu. <https://fr.allafrica.com/stories/202502130438.html>
3. Media Congo. (2025, January 27). Équateur : plus de 10 cas suspects d'Ebola dont 8 décès signalés dans la zone de santé de Bolomba. <https://www.mediacongo.net/article-actualite-146786-equateur-plus-de-10-cas-suspects-d-ebola-dont-8-deces-signalés-dans-la-zone-de-sante-de-bolomba.html>
4. Radar Africa. (2025, February 13). Deadly outbreak spreads in DR Congo's Equateur province. <https://radarafrica.com/africa/deadly-outbreak-spreads-in-dr-congo-equateur-province/>