



ASEAN BIODIASPORA VIRTUAL CENTER

DISEASE ALERT



February 22, 2025 | Issue No. 12

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

Sub-Locations Affected

Province de l'Equateur (Basankusu, Bolomba)

Event Description

On January 27, 2025, an unknown illness was reported in Bolomba, with 12 cases and 8 deaths. On February 13, 2025, another outbreak occurred in Basankusu, resulting in over 50 deaths. By February 19, 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed two separate outbreaks in Équateur province, with a total of 431 cases and 45 deaths as of February 15, 2025.



Map of Province de l'Equateur (Basankusu and Bolomba City), Democratic Republic of the Congo

Epidemiological Information

- On January 27, 2025, Boyenge, Bolomba health zone, reported 12 cases of unknown illness, including eight deaths between January 10-22. The outbreak, linked to three child fatalities, involved fever, headache, diarrhea, fatigue, and bleeding. Preliminary investigations suggest the children may have consumed a dead bat before developing symptoms.
- 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 number of cases has increased rapidly, and nearly 50% of deaths occurred within 48 hours of symptom onset. Symptoms included hemorrhagic fever, headache, and joint pain, with fatalities occurring within 24 hours.

- On February 19, 2025, WHO reported two outbreaks in separate health regions of Équateur province, Basankusu and Bolomba, resulting in 431 cases and 45 deaths as of February 15. No epidemiological link has been identified between the cases in Bolomba and Basankusu health zones.
- WHO is investigating multiple potential causes, including malaria, viral hemorrhagic fevers, food or water poisoning, typhoid, and meningitis, while Ebola and Marburg virus infections have been ruled out in both clusters.

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.
- The WHO and local authorities are conducting laboratory testing, case surveillance, and contact tracing while investigating zoonotic exposure, including bat consumption in Bolomba. Armed conflict in eastern DRC is worsening healthcare access, delaying outbreak response, and worsening food insecurity.
- WHO urges immediate humanitarian access, restoration of infrastructure, and delivery of medical and food aid, emphasizing the need for strengthened public health surveillance to prevent further crises.

Sources:

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5. Radar Africa. (2025, February 13). Deadly outbreak spreads in DR Congo's Equateur province. <https://radarfr.com/africa/deadly-outbreak-spreads-in-dr-congos-equateur-province/>
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