

# UN informed of Ebola virus outbreak in northern DR Congo

12 May 2017 – An Ebola outbreak in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has killed at least one person, the United Nations World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) announced earlier today.

An investigation team led by the Ministry of Health and supported by WHO and partners has deployed and is expected to reach the affected area in the coming days, said WHO Executive Director for Emergencies Peter Salama in a [news release](#) on the situation.

According to WHO, the country's health minister requested the UN agency's support after one of five blood specimens tested positive for the [Ebola virus](#) disease.

On 9 May, WHO was informed of a cluster of undiagnosed illness and deaths, including haemorrhagic symptoms in Likati Health Zone, Bas Uele Province, some 1,300 kilometres (about 800 miles) from the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, and bordering the Central African Republic (CAR).

Since 22 April, nine suspected cases, including three deaths, have been reported. Six cases are currently hospitalized.

The Likati health district is in a remote area, but contact tracing is essential to contain the epidemic in its focus; the DRC can rely on very experienced health workers for this purpose, said WHO's DRC Representative, Yokouidé Allarangar.

Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, would arrive in Kinshasa this weekend to attend a coordination meeting of the national committee at the Ministry of Health to deal with this emergency and ensure that WHO provides all necessary assistance to the DRC.

WHO has also drawn up a comprehensive logistics plan to meet urgent requirements. The first teams of epidemiologists, biologists, and experts in the areas of social mobilization, risk communication and community engagement, and also personnel specializing in water, hygiene and sanitation, are scheduled to reach the affected area today or tomorrow via Kisangani.

More than 11,000 people died and some 28,000 cases were reported in the [Ebola outbreak in West Africa](#) in 2014-2015, mainly in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

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# Iraq: UN refugee camp opens twelfth camp as displacement escalates in West Mosul

12 May 2017 – Less than four weeks after opening its last camp, the United Nations refugee agency welcomed families fleeing the fighting in western Mosul this week with its twelfth camp set up deal with the ongoing emergency in and around the Iraqi city.

“The risk to people fleeing Mosul is now very great, with people having to move being in grave danger. People speak of conditions that are desperate and worsening. Families arriving from West Mosul report heavy bombing and fighting,” [said](#) a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), Andrej Mahecic, today at the regular bi-weekly press briefing in Geneva.

“They also tell UNHCR that there are no basic services in the city, no food, no water and no fuel. Some families have told us they have been living on one meal a day; often just bread, or flour and water, sometimes supplemented with tomato paste,” he continued.

The newest camp was built in response to the ongoing Mosul emergency – less than four weeks since UNHCR opened the Hammam al-Alil 2 camp, with a capacity for 30,000 people, which is now almost full.

Located approximately 60 kilometres west of Mosul along the highway to Erbil, first buses with newly displaced Iraqi families arrived at Hasansham U2 on Tuesday. As of this morning, 96 families, including some 500 children, are being sheltered in the new site.

Each displaced family arriving at Hasansham U2 receives a tent and other basic aid items including blankets, a cooker and a kitchen set. As of today, more than 1,000 tents are ready, enough to shelter over 6,000 people. At full occupancy, it can accommodate more than 9,000 people.



A child walks through the rubble of a building which was destroyed in an airstrike, during fighting between Iraqi security forces and ISIL in western Mosul. 11 March 2017. Photo: UNICEF/Alessio Romenzi

“UNHCR reiterates its call to all parties in the fighting to ensure civilians are not prevented from leaving areas of active conflict and are provided access to safe areas, including those currently trapped in Mosul. Equally, civilians must not be forced to return to unsafe areas,” underscored Mr. Mahecic.

Six months into the Iraqi offensive to oust terrorists from Mosul, UNHCR

remains concerned about the continuing massive displacement. Despite enormous risks, the number of people fleeing West Mosul shows no sign of slowing down.

“We expect more large outflows of people from the west of the city. This is why we and our partners continue to prepare new camps, ready to receive those fleeing Mosul who are desperately in need of assistance,” continued the spokesperson. “The first phase of another camp, al Salamiya 2, with capacity for 30,000 people, is under construction. When completed, the camp will have a capacity for up to 60,000 people.”

The UN refugee agency noted that its current humanitarian efforts to shelter and assist displaced Iraqi families and refugees who fled to Iraq were seriously challenged by waning funding support.

“Our programmes in support of refugees and internally displaced in Iraq are currently only 18 per cent funded [\$105.1 million received out of \$578 million],” Mr. Mahecic pointed out. “This situation now threatens our ability to effectively respond to the immediate and mounting humanitarian needs in Iraq this year,” he added.

According to Iraqi authorities more than 630,000 people have been displaced from Mosul and surrounding areas since October 2016, when the military operation began. This includes more than 434,000 displaced from western Mosul since mid-February. Meanwhile, an estimated 141,000 people have since returned to their areas of origin.

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## [Guinea Bissau: Security Council ‘ready to act’ if political crisis worsens](#)

12 May 2017 – Expressing deep concern over the protracted political and institutional crisis in Guinea Bissau, the United Nations Security Council has said it is ready to take necessary measures if the situation further deteriorates.

“The members of the Security Council reiterated their commitment to continue to monitor the current political crisis and expressed their readiness to take necessary measures to respond to further worsening of the situation in Guinea Bissau,” said a [statement](#) to the press issued yesterday by the 15-member body after a closed-door briefing on the situation.

In the statement, the Council reaffirmed that the Conakry Agreement of 14 October 2016, which was brokered by the Economic Community of West African States ([ECOWAS](#)), is a primary framework for resolving the political crisis, calling upon the Bissau-Guinean stakeholders to strictly comply with the accord and the ECOWAS road map in addressing their differences and the country’s challenges.

Regarding the planned withdrawal of the regional body's 500-strong force that has been deployed to the country since the April 2012 coup, the Council urged the international community to give all necessary support to ensure a complete and seamless transition of security architecture to the national defence and security forces.

The Council also expressed concern about the situation of the civilian population in the country, and urged all political actors to put the interest of the people of Guinea Bissau above all other considerations.

The Council welcomed the active engagement of the UN Peacebuilding Commission with relevant stakeholders on the ground as well as with regional organizations to support efforts towards a political solution.

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## [UK's Mark Lowcock appointed to head up UN relief wing](#)

12 May 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today appointed Mark Lowcock, a national of the United Kingdom, as the United Nation's highest official on humanitarian assistance and aid coordination, the UN Spokesperson's office announced today.

As the head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), Mr. Lowcock will take on a dual role: Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Mr. Lowcock will succeed Stephen O'Brien, who will remain in his current role until the end of August "to conclude a [number of initiatives and reforms](#) he has been leading at OCHA," it was announced.

The Secretary-General commended Mr. O'Brien, who took on the role in 2015, for his "excellent work, dedication and commitment to the United Nations and global humanitarian action."

With 30 years of experience leading and managing response to humanitarian crises, Mr. Lowcock has worked in Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe, among other locations.

He is currently the Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Development (DFID), which leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty.

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# UN report assesses 'huge benefits' and challenges of green energy revolution

12 May 2017 – The latest United Nations report on energy-efficiency technologies shows that low-carbon technologies apparently aid clean air, save water and cut land use, and could reduce 25 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and 17 million tonnes of particulates a year.

“We are on the right track. We know that cleaning up the air we breathe gives rise to huge benefits to both human and environmental health, and we know, too, that low-carbon energy efficiency technologies can help us reduce damaging climate change,” said Erik Solheim, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) in a [press release](#) on the new report.

At the same time, the UN Environment chief said: “[We are] also clear on the need for greater action on building a circular economy that cuts waste, and on production innovations that could also create new, green jobs.”

Entitled “[Green Technology Choices](#): The Environmental and Resource Implications of Low-Carbon Technologies,” the report, released today at the Vienna Energy Forum, was compiled by a group of eminent experts in natural resource management hosted by UN Environment.

The panel examined eight energy efficiency technologies and 36 sub-technologies across buildings, industry and transportation and provided a global assessment of the benefits, risks and trade-offs encountered when energy efficiency technologies are deployed alongside low-carbon electricity supply technologies.

Among its findings, the report notes that research confirms that demand-side technologies reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as many other environmental impacts. However, the magnitude of those improvements varies widely among technologies and regions.

Indeed, in some cases, say the experts, demand-side technologies may increase resource consumption and even greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand where, when, and with which technology investment should be placed to maximize benefits.

The report compared two scenarios – one for a global temperature rise of 6 degrees Celsius and the other assuming that the global target of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels is achieved.

Key findings of the analysis include:

- Under the 2-degree scenario, low-carbon energy production and energy efficiency technologies have the potential to cut about 25 billion tonnes a year of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which is about 34 per cent lower than the emissions under business-as-usual.

- under the 2-degree scenario more than 17 million tonnes per year of particulate matter and over 3 billion tonnes of emissions toxic to humans could be avoided through the use of low-carbon energy technologies
- Low-carbon energy technologies could save more than 200 billion cubic metres of water a year and nearly 150,000 square kilometres of land occupation by 2050.
- Transformation to low-carbon energy technologies will require over 600 million tonnes of metal resources by 2050 for additional infrastructure and wiring needs.