

New Ebola case detected in eastern DRC

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Health workers dressed in protective suits are seen at the Doctors Without Borders Ebola treatment centre in Goma, DRC. (Photo: Baz Ratner/Reuters)

Goma, February 8 (RHC)-- A new case of Ebola has been identified near the city of Butembo in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the country's health ministry has announced. A woman was found with symptoms of the deadly virus in the town of Biena on February 1, who died in hospital in Butembo on February 3. She was married to a man who had contracted the virus in a previous outbreak.

“The provincial response team is already hard at work. It will be supported by the national response team which will visit Butembo shortly,” the ministry said in a statement on Sunday. The announcement potentially marks the start of the DRC’s 12th Ebola outbreak since the virus was discovered near the Ebola River in 1976, more than double any other country.

It comes nearly three months after the DRC announced the end to its 11th outbreak hundreds of kilometres away in the west, which infected 130 people and killed 55. That outbreak overlapped with an earlier one in the east that killed more than 2,200 people, the second-most in the disease’s history.

The emergence of more cases could complicate efforts to eradicate COVID-19, which has infected 23,600 people and killed 681 in the DRC. A vaccination campaign is expected to start in the first half of this year.

Ebola is a virus-caused haemorrhagic fever that is spread through contact with body fluids. In extreme cases, it causes fatal bleeding from internal organs, the mouth, eyes or ears.

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