

Uganda discharges last known Ebola patient



Red Cross workers sanitize a house after burying a 3-year-old boy suspected of dying from Ebola on October 13, 2022 in Mubende, Uganda [Luke Dray/Getty Images]

Kampala, December 3 (RHC)-- Uganda has discharged its last known Ebola patient from hospital, a senior health official has said, raising hopes that an outbreak that has killed at least 56 people would end soon. Officials first confirmed the outbreak in September and said it was the Sudan strain of the virus, which kills 40 to 60 percent of those it infects and for which there is no proven vaccine.

“Happy to announce that we discharged the past Ebola patient,” Diana Atwine, a top official at the health ministry, posted on Twitter on Friday. “God has seen us through this epidemic.” She said medics would continue to monitor people who had come into contact with infected patients until they have been clear for 21 days. She did not say when the last case was confirmed.

In October, the government had imposed travel restrictions, an overnight curfew and shut places of worship and entertainment to try to contain the outbreak in central Uganda, but several cases later appeared in the capital and east of the country.

In late November, President Yoweri Museveni extended a quarantine by 21 days that had been placed on two districts at the epicentre of the outbreak. The decision was made days after Health Minister Jane Ruth Aceng said there was a downward trend in the number of recorded cases.

Ebola causes vomiting, bleeding and diarrhoea and spreads through contact with infected people’s bodily fluids. The virus can sometimes linger in the eyes, central nervous system and bodily fluids of survivors and flare up years later.

Uganda has recorded 142 infections from the latest outbreak. The World Health Organization says a country needs to go 42 days – twice the maximum incubation period – after its last confirmed case to be declared Ebola-free.

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