

Uganda Ebola epidemic death toll climbs to 44: WHO

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The death toll from an Ebola epidemic declared last month in Uganda has climbed to 44, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing in Geneva that there had been 60 confirmed and 20 probable cases, with 44 deaths and 25 recoveries.

"We remain concerned that there may be more chains of transmission and more contacts than we know about in the affected communities," he added.

The previous [death toll](#) provided by the WHO on October 5 reported 29 fatalities.

President Yoweri Museveni last week ordered two districts at the heart of the epidemic in central Uganda to be put under lockdown, imposing a travel ban, a curfew and the closure of public places.

Museveni had already ordered traditional healers to stop treating the sick, in a bid to stop the spread of the virus.

He also ordered the police to arrest anyone infected with Ebola who refused to isolate.

The authorities say the [outbreak](#) remains concentrated in the central districts of Mubende and Kassanda has not reached Kampala, despite a couple testing positive for the virus in the capital.

Tedros on Wednesday said two cases from Mubende sought care in Kampala, "increasing the risks of transmission in the city" of 1.5 million people.

Ebola is spread through bodily fluids, with common symptoms being fever, vomiting, bleeding and diarrhoea.

Outbreaks are difficult to contain, especially in urban environments.

Uganda's last recorded fatality from a previous Ebola outbreak was in 2019.

The particular strain now circulating in Uganda is known as the Sudan Ebola virus, for which there is currently no vaccine.

The World Health Organization says clinical trials could start within weeks on drugs to combat that strain.

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