

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

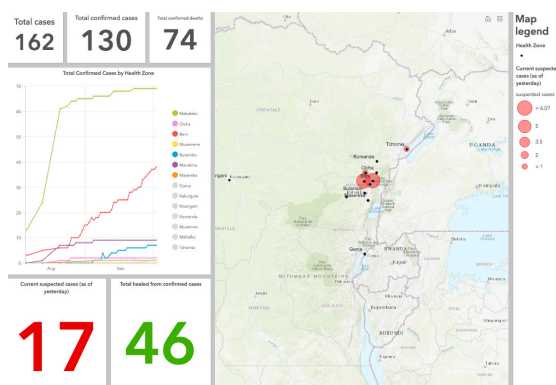
# WFP's Response to the Ebola Outbreak in DRC

Ebola continues to threaten DRC and neighbouring countries as WFP steps up its emergency response to save lives before it's too late.

## COMPLEX OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

On 1 August 2018, the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) declared the 10th Ebola outbreak in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. This is the second Ebola outbreak in the country this year alone and is happening against the background of a worsening food security and nutrition crisis in DRC. Over **one million** people are internally displaced in eastern DRC and continue to be affected by insecurity, with over **50 armed groups** operating in North Kivu. In areas affected by Ebola, militant activity along key transport routes hampers the effectiveness of the humanitarian response against the epidemic. In addition, outbreaks of **cholera, measles** and **monkey-pox** spread across the country, further aggravate the health crisis.

As of 4 October, **74 people have died** from Ebola in six health zones in North Kivu Province (Beni, Butembo, Mabalako, Masereka, Musienene, and Oicha), as well as Mandima health zone in Ituri Province. Ebola cases are monitored on a daily basis and the latest figures can be visualized in the [interactive dashboard](#):



The lack of basic infrastructure, such as roads and air strips, inhibits the swift access of aid workers to rapidly contain the outbreak as it continues to spread to new areas. In addition, heavy rains exacerbate poor road conditions and make the transport of goods unpredictable. Conditions are expected to deteriorate especially in rural areas, as the rainy season advances in October.

## EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO EBOLA VICTIMS

Before the declaration of the Ebola outbreak in North Kivu, WFP was already assisting hundreds of thousands of people displaced by armed conflict in the province. In light of Ebola and the additional humanitarian needs, WFP is expanding its operations to assist also those affected by the epidemic.

Since the beginning of the Ebola response operation, WFP has provided food and nutrition assistance to more than **21,000 people** affected by Ebola and distributed **305 metric tonnes** of food as of 2 October, in partnership with Caritas. A month's supply of cereal, beans, oil and salt is provided to patients and caregivers in hospitals located in the towns of Mangina and Beni, and also to villages in the epidemic-stricken areas to reach persons who have been in contact with affected people. This has helped to limit population movements, which could spread the virus further. WFP's food assistance also supported humanitarian agencies to track people affected by Ebola. People who were resistant against contact tracing, vaccinations, and medical care were more likely to identify themselves as being affected by the virus, once they recognized that rations were provided to affected people. To reinforce the response to critically ill patients, WFP airlifted high energy biscuits from its warehouse in Dubai to Goma and Beni. These biscuits are often used in emergencies as they are nutritious, light, easy to transport and do not need cooking facilities.



**20 tonnes of high energy biscuits airlifted by WFP from Dubai reached DRC where distributions to patients suffering from Ebola started on 5 September.**



Distribution of high energy biscuits by WFP, Caritas and medical partners in Beni

## WFP'S LOGISTICAL EXPERTISE IN ACTION

Alongside the peacekeeping force MONUSCO, which is the UN's first responder in logistics given its existing capacity in-country, WFP is providing logistical support to the Ebola response. This support is based on requests made by WHO and the Ministry of Health, and consists of the following activities:

3



mobile warehouses deployed to Beni

20-30



staff on stand-by ready to be deployed

17



staff deployed to provide logistics, emergency, supply chain and admin support

7



WFP trucks carrying staff, medicine, food and other items to treatment centres

2



helicopters made available to enable teams to quickly reach remote locations and transport supplies and blood samples

2



camps constructed and managed to host over 250 humanitarian and health workers

In addition, **WFP-run humanitarian flights** transport aid workers as well as medical and protection equipment, and other cargo, between Goma and Beni on a daily basis.

## RISK MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

Although the number of new Ebola cases in Beni and Mangina is slowly plateauing, the risk of the virus spreading to other densely populated areas and in neighbouring countries remains elevated. This is due to the high degree of **population movement** across borders, coupled with **limited national capacities** to prevent, detect and respond to Ebola cases. Some Ebola patients have fled to areas controlled by non-state armed groups, which are inaccessible to medical responders. Countries at high risk of being affected by an Ebola outbreak include: Uganda, Burundi, South Sudan and Rwanda. WFP made funds readily available to the Country Office through a dedicated **immediate response account for preparedness and emergency**. This allowed the Country Office to develop and implement a comprehensive **contingency plan** to prepare for the risk of a further spread of the epidemic both in DRC and to neighbouring countries. As the UN lead agency for the Logistics Cluster and Emergency Telecommunication Cluster, WFP in coordination with the Ministries of Health, WHO and other partners, is setting up a **regional logistics staging area** in Uganda. The staging area will contain storage units and relief items prepositioned through the UN Humanitarian Response Depot network, also used by partners to dispatch goods rapidly to critical areas. In addition, it will have the function of coordinating logistics common services such as: Humanitarian Air Services, Humanitarian Response Depot, fleet, engineering, information management and civil military coordination support.

## NEED TO ACT NOW

WFP will continue to provide critical, emergency logistics augmentation and coordination mechanisms to strengthen the humanitarian response to the Ebola outbreak in DRC and prepare for a potential spread in its neighbouring countries. This includes support to WHO, the Ministry of Health and partners in: aviation, logistics equipment/services, camp set up/management, staffing, IT and security. Through close collaboration with humanitarian and government partners, WFP aims to strengthen existing partnerships and enhance the response capabilities of local governments for existing and future crises.