

Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo (starting May 2018)

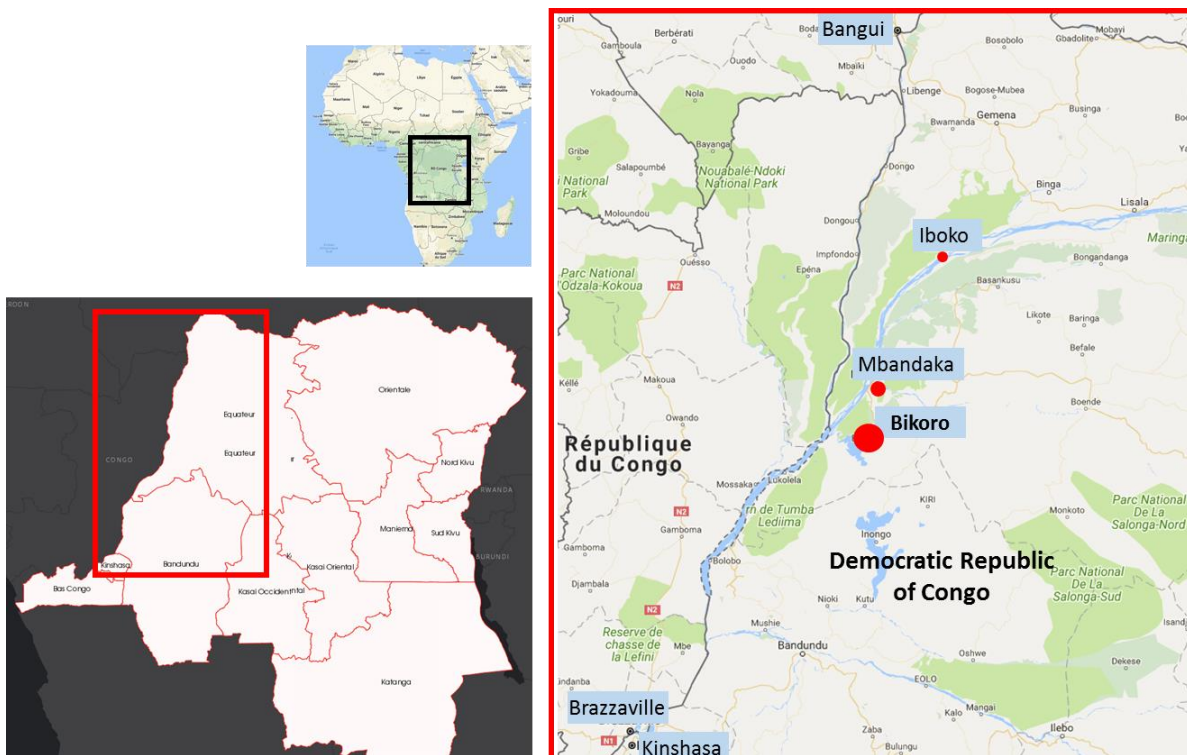


Key facts:

- This is the 9th recorded outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with the most recent occurring in May 2017.
- EVD is a severe acute illness in humans with an incubation period of 2-21 days, which is fatal in around 50% of cases.
- The causative agent of this outbreak was identified by the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB) of Kinshasa and Inserm as the Zaire ebolavirus species of the Filoviridae virus family, the same species that caused the 2014-2016 West African epidemic. The other 4 known species of the Ebolavirus genus are: Bundibugyo, Sudan, Reston and Tai Forest.
- The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads within the human population through direct human-to-human transmission, including broken skin, mucous membranes, blood or other bodily fluids of infected persons, as well as indirectly through contaminated surfaces and materials.

What is the situation on the ground?

The outbreak was declared on the 8th of May 2018 by the DRC health ministry. To date (22 May 2018) a total of 58 probable cases have been identified (including 28 confirmed cases and 27 deaths), of which 3 health workers were affected. A further 628 contacts have been listed by the WHO field teams (<http://www.who.int/ebola/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-ebola-23may2018.pdf?ua=1>).



Map showing the location and relative number of Ebola cases (red dots) in the affected region of the Equateur Province.

What is the involvement of REACTING?

The partnership established between the two institutes, INRB of Kinshasa and Inserm (University of Montpellier) is an active part of the REACTing platform, as well as its program to monitor the reservoir of the Ebola virus in Africa. This collaboration allowed the transfer of technology and the exchange of researchers between the two institutes, which permitted the on-site identification of the virus circulating in the DRC outbreak (<https://presse.inserm.fr/en/the-national-institute-for-biomedical-research-inrb-of-kinshasa-and-inserm-have-characterized-the-nature-of-the-ebola-virus-responsible-for-the-9th-epidemic-currently-raging-in-the-democratic-republ/31425/>). This genetic characterisation was achieved without requiring the isolation of the live virus and just under 2 weeks following the official declaration of the outbreak by the DRC Ministry of Health, thus contributing to a more rapid response.