New Cluster of Ebola Virus Disease in DRC: Squeezing the Balloon?

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On August 1, 2018, just one week after the declared end of the Ebola epidemic in Equateur Province, in a press release the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced that preliminary laboratory results indicate a cluster of cases of Ebola virus in North Kivu province. This province is 2500 km far from the Equateur province.

On Sat 28 Jul 2018, the Provincial Health Division of North Kivu notified to the Ministry of Health twenty-six cases of Fever with haemorrhagic signs, including twenty deaths in the health zone of Mangina located in the health zone of Mabalako, territory of Beni, in the Province of North Kivu.

Six samples taken from hospitalized patients arrived in Kinshasa this Tue 31Jul 2018 and were analyzed by the National Institute of Biomedical Research (INRB). Of the six samples analyzed, four were positive for Ebola Virus Disease. Sequencing is in progress at INRB to identify the strain of the virus.

The majority of the cases are in the Mangina health area which is 30 kilometres from the city of Beni. “This new cluster is occurring in an environment which is very different from where we were operating in the northwest,” said Dr Peter Salama, WHO Deputy Director-General, Emergency Preparedness and Response. “This is an active conflict zone. The major barrier will be safely accessing the affected population.”

North Kivu hosts over 1 million displaced people. The province shares borders with Rwanda and Uganda with a great deal of cross border movement due to the trade activities.

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