

# Ebola: Two health workers test positive as cases rise to seven

Uganda yesterday confirmed two new Ebola cases, raising the country's total number of confirmed cases to seven as the ministry of health intensifies surveillance and contact tracing.

The Ministry of Health said the two patients are Ugandan health workers attached to a private health facility in Kampala and are currently receiving treatment at a designated Ebola isolation and treatment unit.

In a statement issued yesterday, Dr Charles Olaro, the director general of health services, said response teams had already started tracing all individuals who may have come into contact with the two health workers.

"The two new confirmed cases are Ugandan health

workers working in a private health facility in Kampala. Both patients have been admitted to the designated treatment unit and are now receiving care. All contacts linked to the confirmed cases are being listed for follow-up by response teams," Olaro said.

The latest infections come just days after Uganda confirmed three other Ebola cases on Saturday, including a driver and another health worker linked to the country's first Ebola patient, alongside a Congolese woman who had travelled between Uganda and the DR Congo.

The health ministry has not yet disclosed how the newly infected Kampala health workers were exposed to the

virus, but investigations are ongoing as authorities work to prevent further transmission.

The new cases are likely to raise fresh concern over the vulnerability of frontline medical workers who remain among the most

exposed groups during Ebola outbreaks because of direct contact with infected patients.

Uganda has already activated emergency response systems, intensified surveillance at border points and expanded screening operations in health facilities following the recent



Charles Olaro, the director general of health services

Ebola cases linked to neighbouring DR Congo.

The latest infections come amid growing regional concern over the worsening Ebola outbreak in eastern DR Congo, where more than 200 deaths and hundreds of suspected infections have already been reported.

## PROTECTIVE GEAR SHORTAGE

The worsening Ebola outbreak in eastern DR Congo has also exposed dangerous conditions facing frontline health workers, with medics reporting severe shortages of protective gear and emergency medical supplies as the epidemic spreads.

Health workers responding to the outbreak in Ituri province, the epicentre of the epidemic,

said they are treating suspected Ebola patients without adequate personal protective equipment despite the high risk of infection associated with the virus.

"The situation on the ground is truly alarming," said Ruben Dedja, the chief medical officer of the Mongbwalu health zone in Ituri province, warning that local health teams were struggling to contain the outbreak with limited resources.

"As yet, we do not have the rapid intervention kits at the health zone level. We've been told they are on their way," Dedja said, adding that the lack of supplies meant there was "no way to limit the spread" effectively.