

# Tanzania not sharing information on suspected Ebola, says WHO

**NAIROBI:** The World Health Organization has accused Tanzania of failing to provide information on suspected cases of Ebola in the country, potentially hindering efforts to curb the spread of the deadly virus. East African nations have been on high alert over an outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has left 2,103 people dead. Four people were diagnosed with the virus in Uganda and later died.

The WHO said it had learned on September 10 of a suspected case of the disease in Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam, and information emerged that this patient's contacts had been quarantined, and that the person had tested positive for Ebola.

Two other suspected cases were also unofficially reported. "Despite several requests, WHO did not receive further details of any of these cases from Tanzanian authorities," the organization said in a statement issued Saturday. On September 14 Tanzanian authorities officially reported there was no Ebola in the country, but declined "secondary confirmation testing" at a WHO centre, the global body said.

Then on Thursday, the WHO was made aware that a contact of the initial patient was sick and in hospital. "To date, the clinical details and the results of the investigation, including laboratory tests performed for differential diagnosis of these patients, have not been shared with WHO."

The lack of information received by WHO meant it cannot determine the cause of the illness, it said. "The limited available official information from Tanzanian authorities represents a challenge for assessing the risk posed by this event."

### 'Very high risk'

The WHO determined that because the initial patient travelled widely in the country and due to uncertainty around the cases, the lack of information and the fact that, if confirmed, it would be the first-ever outbreak of Ebola in the country, "the risk was assessed as very high at national level".

"At this stage, WHO is not aware of signs of a widespread transmission of any illness related to these cases, however investigations, including with the support of WHO Collaborating Centres, should continue to reach a diagnosis and further inform the risk assessment," said the statement.

They also warned of a high risk for the region. The ongoing Ebola outbreak is the second-worst in history after more than 11,000 people died in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2014 and 2016. But the



**NAIROBI:** Tanzania is refusing to provide detailed information on suspected Ebola cases, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a rare public rebuke as the region struggles with an outbreak already declared a global health emergency. — Reuters

containment efforts have been hindered from the start by conflict in eastern DRC, as well as attacks on medical teams tackling the

hemorrhagic fever amid resistance within some communities to preventative measures, care facilities and safe burials. — AFP

## Health investment needed to curb out-of-pocket spending: WHO

**GENEVA:** Governments must boost spending on primary health care by at least an additional 1 percent of their gross domestic product to widen coverage and stop impoverishing patients, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday.

Despite some progress, more people are having to pay out-of-pocket for often costly medicines and treatment, the U.N. agency said in a report compiled with the OECD and World Bank.

Public investment in primary health care close to home, including immunization, is key to extending coverage and saving lives, it said. "We believe it is achievable and affordable," Dr. Peter Salama, WHO executive director of universal health coverage, told a news conference. It would cost an additional \$200 billion per year to scale up primary health care in low- and middle-income countries, he said. "Even though it seems like a large sum, we know most countries can actually afford to do this based on their domestic resources." — Reuters

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