

Health ministry in Uganda sees downward trend in Ebola cases

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A Ugandan health worker shows an informational flyer on the Ebola virus and how to prevent its spread [File: James Akena/Reuters]

Kampala, November 25 (RHC) Central Uganda's Mubende district was where the outbreak was originally declared on September 20. It and another district, Kassanda, are considered to be the epicentres for the disease's spread. Movement in and out of them has been restricted.

"We are seeing a downward trend in the number of cases," Health Minister Jane Ruth Aceng said on the local NTV news service late on Wednesday, citing the absence of new cases in the two districts over

many days.

"We are also not seeing new cases in Kampala, in the greater Kampala metropolitan area, neither are we seeing cases in Masaka and Jinja," two other cities, she said.

A spokesperson for the health ministry, Emmanuel Ainebyoona, told Reuters news agency on Thursday that Mubende had gone for at least 16 days without a new case and that Kampala, the capital, had not recorded new infections for at least two weeks.

The virus circulating in Uganda is the Sudan strain of Ebola, for which there is no proven vaccine, unlike the more common Zaire strain, which spread during recent outbreaks in neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. But three candidate vaccines against the Sudan strain are planned for a clinical trial in Uganda. The World Health Organization and aid groups are also providing Uganda with assistance to cope with the outbreak.

The country has so far recorded 141 cases and 55 deaths, according to the health ministry.

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