

The World Health Organization (WHO) is on high alert as the mpox outbreak in Africa rapidly escalates, prompting concerns of a potential global health crisis. The WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has signaled a possible declaration of a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is at the epicenter of the outbreak, with a surge in cases and the emergence of a more virulent strain. Neighboring countries are also reporting increasing infections.

The African Union has allocated \$10.4 million to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to combat the crisis.

Mpox, a viral illness with symptoms including fever, muscle aches, and a distinctive rash, has been endemic in parts of Africa for decades. However, the recent surge has intensified fears of a broader outbreak.

Dr. Edson Rwagasore from Rwanda's Biomedical Center warned that while most people recover, the disease can be severe in certain groups. It spreads through contact with infected people or animals, contaminated materials, or respiratory droplets.

Symptoms typically appear within a week of exposure and include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, chills, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash.

As the situation worsens, health authorities globally monitor the outbreak and work to contain its spread. The WHO's decision on a PHEIC will significantly impact the global response to mpox.