The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a possible new outbreak of the deadly Marburg virus in north-west Tanzania. At least eight people have died so far.

According to the WHO, nine suspected cases were reported in the Kagera region over the last five days.

“We expect more cases in the coming days as monitoring improves,” said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on social media.

Marburg is a highly contagious virus similar to Ebola. Symptoms include fever, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and, in severe cases, death caused by heavy blood.

This is not the first time Tanzania has faced Marburg. In March 2023, an outbreak in the Bukoba district killed six people and lasted nearly two months.

The WHO says healthcare workers and other patients showing symptoms are under observation. Rapid response teams have been sent to the affected region to track and contain the virus.

The Kagera region is a transit hub, with movement across borders to countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This increases the risk of the virus spreading locally.

Despite this, the WHO has stated that the global risk remains low and does not recommend travel or trade restrictions with Tanzania at this time.

The Marburg virus is spread from fruit bats to humans and then through contact with the bodily fluids of infected people.

There is no specific treatment or vaccine yet, though trials are ongoing. On average, the virus kills about half of those infected, according to WHO data.

So far, Tanzanian officials have not confirmed this latest outbreak.