

Uganda has barred travellers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from transiting through its territory after an imported Ebola case in Nigeria.

The Ministry of Health announced the measure on Friday, 23 October, while investigating a woman who travelled through Uganda before testing positive for Bundibugyo Ebola in Nigeria.

“Travellers with a history of travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo will not be permitted to transit through Uganda,” said Director General of Health Services Prof. Charles Olaro.

The DRC outbreak has killed 4,687 people among 9,704 confirmed cases. Uganda recorded 20 cases, including two deaths, since 15 May. The last confirmed case in Uganda was reported on 21 June. Kenya’s toll stands at two deaths among nine confirmed cases.

Nigeria confirmed its imported case on 20 October. Nigeria’s Health Minister, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, said genomic sequencing shows the virus differs from Kenya’s first imported case by just one mutation. Genetic similarity alone does not show where either patient was infected.

Uganda’s ministry said the woman showed no symptoms when she left Uganda. It has asked Nigeria for her travel records and sequencing results, and is working with Nigeria, Africa CDC, the US CDC and the World Health Organization.

The new measures include; traveller locator forms are reinstated for all passengers, to support contact tracing, infection control is strengthened at borders, airports and health facilities.

Additionally, anyone breaching health requirements faces action under the Public Health Act, and people entering through unauthorised routes will be referred to the authorities.

The ministry did not say how the transit ban will be enforced or how long it will last. It could affect passengers using Entebbe International Airport.

Olaro said Uganda has no confirmed Ebola cases. “Uganda remains Ebola-free,” he said.