

The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners have ramped up support for Uganda in response to a new outbreak of Sudan virus disease (SVD), part of the Ebola virus family.

In a rapid effort to contain the outbreak, 2,160 doses of a candidate vaccine and experimental treatments have been deployed to Kampala as part of pre-positioned outbreak preparedness.

Currently, Uganda has one confirmed SVD case and 45 contacts under surveillance. This marks the country's sixth outbreak, following the 2022 epidemic that saw 164 cases and 77 fatalities. WHO is working closely with Uganda's Ministry of Health, Makerere University Lung Institute, and the Uganda Virus Research Institute to spearhead clinical trials and evaluate the efficacy of the candidate vaccine.

The trials will target those at highest risk, including close contacts of infected individuals, using a ring vaccination approach. The goal is not only to help halt the ongoing outbreak but also to protect communities from future threats.

The vaccine, developed by IAVI, is being tested alongside treatments like the antiviral remdesivir from Gilead. Global partners, including the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and Africa CDC, are supporting the initiative. WHO has allocated \$1 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies to accelerate outbreak control measures.

While SVD can be controlled without vaccines, WHO stresses that using safe and effective vaccines may significantly speed up containment. Comprehensive measures are also underway, including tracing contacts, boosting community awareness, and conducting epidemiological investigations.

Sudan virus disease is a severe, often fatal illness with case fatality rates ranging from 41% to 100% in past outbreaks. There are currently no approved vaccines or treatments, though early supportive care has proven effective in reducing fatalities.