



By: TA | AP Brief

WHO sees 'encouraging signs' in Congo Ebola fight



The head of the U.N. health agency is hailing “encouraging signs” in the fight against an Ebola outbreak in one part of eastern Congo, while warning that case counts are rising fast in another as officials race to tamp down the virus.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Wednesday that signs of gaining ground against the Bundibugyo virus, the rare species **behind the outbreak**, have emerged in Ituri province.

But he said that the situation is one of “many outbreaks in many places.”

“We are now starting to see encouraging signs that we are gaining ground. In the most affected parts of Ituri province, transmission is going down,” Tedros told reporters at the agency’s headquarters in Geneva.

South Kivu, he said, has reported no new cases since May.

“But make no mistake, the epidemic continues to grow and continues to kill,” Tedros said. He said more than 7,200 cases and more than 3,500 deaths have been reported across seven provinces.

Cases are rising fast

In North Kivu, “cases are rising fast,” Tedros said. The number of weekly cases has nearly doubled over the past two weeks, from about 100 to more than 200. “The area is so vast that it’s hard to speak of a single epidemic. It’s many outbreaks in many places.”

We can be cautiously optimistic about what is happening - Maria Van Kerkhove

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO’s director for epidemic and pandemic management, said that “we can be cautiously optimistic about what is happening, but I think we need to be

realistic about the road that’s ahead of us. Looking at trends takes time.”

Last week, **officials in Congo** said that the world’s fastest-growing outbreak of the disease on record had now spread to seven provinces in the African country, and was showing no signs of slowing down.