

Outbreak Brief #25: Mpox in African Union Member States

Date of Issue: 4 January 2023

1,262 confirmed cases, 226 deaths in AU MS

Data sources: US CDC, WHO, and AU Member State Ministries of Health

Global Update (non-endemic countries)¹: As of 28 December 2022, 83,582 confirmed cases of mpox and 282 deaths were reported from 110 countries/territories globally. The countries reporting the majority of cases are mainly in Europe and the Americas.²

Africa update (endemic³ and non-endemic countries): Since the beginning of 2022, the continent has reported 1,262 confirmed cases and 226 deaths (CFR: 18%) of mpox from eight endemic Africa Union (AU) Member States (MS): Benin (3 confirmed cases; 0 confirmed deaths), Cameroon (18; 3), Central African Republic (CAR) (13; 3), Congo (5; 3), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (319; 204), Ghana (116; 4), Liberia (4; 0), Nigeria (753; 7) and five non-endemic MS: Egypt (4; 0), Morocco (3; 0), Mozambique (1; 1), South Africa (5; 0) and Sudan (18; 1). This week, 47 new confirmed cases and seven new deaths of mpox were reported from CAR and DRC.

Central African Republic: Since the last update (27 May 2022), the MoH reported 5 new confirmed cases and one new death (CFR: 20%) of mpox. This is a 17% decrease in the number of new confirmed cases and no percentage change in the number of new confirmed deaths compared to the last brief. Cumulatively, 13 confirmed cases and three deaths (CFR: 23%) of mpox were reported from six districts.

DRC: Since the last update (20 December 2022), the MoH reported 42 new cases and six new deaths (CFR: 14.3%) of mpox. There is no percentage change in the number of new cases reported and 40% decrease in the number of new deaths compared to the last brief. Cumulatively, 319 confirmed cases and 204 deaths (CFR: 63.9%) were reported from 23 of the 26 provinces.

¹ Global case and death numbers are inclusive of numbers being reported in Africa.

² US CDC - [2022 Monkeypox Outbreak Global Map - Poxvirus](#); WHO - [2022 Monkeypox Outbreak: Global Trends \(shinyapps.io\)](#)

³ Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, and Sierra Leone

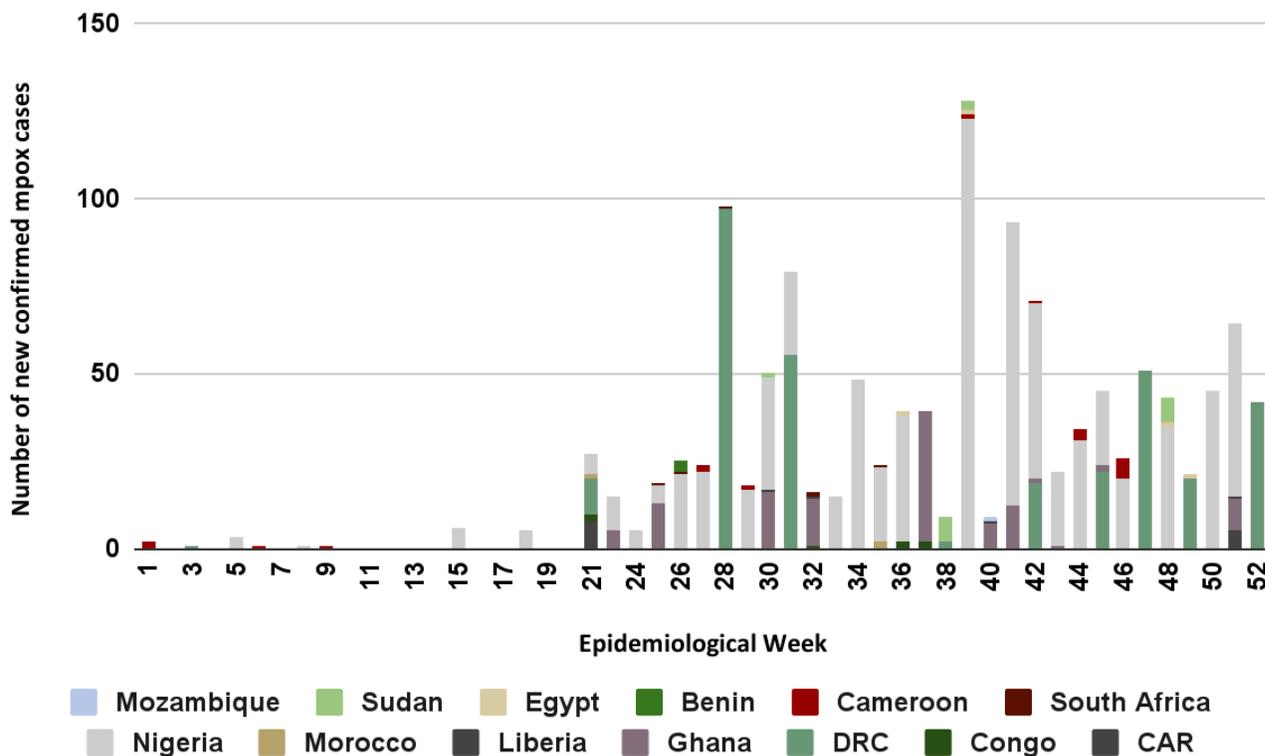


Figure 1. New confirmed mpox cases reported by epidemiological week in AU MS, January - December 2022⁴

The majority of AU MS reporting cases are from the central and western Africa regions with DRC, Ghana and Nigeria accounting for 94% of all confirmed cases reported (Table 1).

⁴ The high numbers of confirmed cases reported from DRC in epi week 28 (11- 17 July) is likely the result of batch reporting.

Table 1. Cumulative confirmed mpox cases and deaths reported from African Union Member States as of 31 December 2022.

Country	Total confirmed cases (new)	Total confirmed deaths (new)	CFR ⁵
Benin	3 (0)	0 (0)	0%
Cameroon	18 (0)	3 (0)	17%
Central African Republic	13 (5)	3 (1)	23%
Congo Republic	5 (0)	3 (0)	60%
Democratic Republic of Congo	319 (42)	204 ⁶ (6)	63.9%
Ghana	116 (0)	4 (0)	3.4%
Egypt	4 (0)	0 (0)	0%
Liberia	4 (0)	0 (0)	0%
Morocco	3 (0)	0 (0)	0%
Mozambique	1 (0)	1 (0)	100%
Nigeria	753 (0)	7 (0)	1%
Sudan	18 (0)	1 (0)	5%
South Africa	5 (0)	0 (0)	0%
TOTAL	1,262⁷ (47)	226 (7)	18%

Event Geoscope and Risk Assessment Levels

Geoscope level: High

Risk level: Moderate

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) conducted a preliminary assessment of the geographic scope (geoscope)⁸ and risk level for the mpox events being

⁵ Case fatality ratio is the proportion of confirmed deaths over confirmed cases.

⁶ Africa CDC cannot ascertain that all deaths reported from DRC are laboratory confirmed. Africa CDC is working with the DRC to clarify this data.

⁷ Africa CDC inadvertently reported 1,176 last week instead of 1,156 for total confirmed cases.

⁸ The **GeoScope level** is determined by where the event is currently occurring on the continent. **Low:** event is limited to sub-national areas within one MS; **Moderate:** Event is

reported for Africa and globally. Given that this outbreak is currently affecting multiple countries both on and outside of the continent, the geoscope assessment is high. If additional AU MS report disease linked to this outbreak, we will reassess and elevate accordingly. For the risk assessment level, we looked at the following criteria: morbidity and mortality of the disease, probability to spread within and to other AU MS, and the availability of effective treatments, vaccines, or other control measures. We have listed the risk level as moderate given that mpox is not easily transmissible, it is a self-limiting disease with low mortality, which lacks effective treatment for those infected. We are closely monitoring the situation and we will reevaluate the risk periodically.

Member State Response Activities

CAR: The MoH conducted case investigations in the affected districts.

DRC: The MoH continues to conduct refresher training for healthcare workers at all levels.

New Africa CDC Response Activities

- On 8 August 2022, the Africa CDC Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated to support preparedness and response efforts of African Union Member States, in close collaboration with relevant partners
- The Africa CDC continues to provide support to AU MS with laboratory test kits on request.
- The Africa CDC continues to engage with Ministries of Health in Member States reporting cases to provide support as requested

Recommendations for AU Member States

Member States are advised to:

- Establish laboratory diagnostic and genomic sequencing capacity for orthopoxviruses, including mpox.
- Establish and/or strengthen existing mpox surveillance efforts.
- Develop and distribute both general and tailored risk communication messages for the community at large as well as specific populations currently impacted and at risk (e.g., sex-workers, immunocompromised individuals, children).
- Strengthen knowledge of mpox clinical management and infection prevention control measures.
- Report new cases of mpox as part of the current multi-country outbreak to Africa CDC (AfricaCDCEBS@Africa-Union.org)
- Member States that need support from Africa CDC should submit requests for support to the

affecting multiple countries within an AU region, or have been imported from/exported to 1-2 countries from another global region; **High:** Event is affecting several multinational AU regions, or have been imported from/exported to >2 countries from another global region; **Very high:** Event is considered a pandemic, affecting multiple continents or worldwide

Director Africa CDC (AfricaCDCEBS@Africa-Union.org)

The general public is advised to:

- Seek medical attention if you experience any mpox-like symptoms (e.g., develop rash with or without prior symptoms of fever, swollen lymph nodes, body aches, and weakness), especially if you have been in contact with a positive case
- Practice effective hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after contact with any infected animal or human
- Avoid contact with animals that could harbor the virus, including animals that are sick or found dead in areas where mpox occurs
- Avoid contact with any potentially contaminated material, such as clothes and bedding, with which animals with mpox have been in contact with
- If deemed a close contact of a mpox case, individuals should self-monitor for the development of symptoms up to 21 days from the last exposure to a case
- If you are infected with mpox, adhere to recommended isolation protocols prescribed by your medical provider to minimize transmission to others, including pets and other animals that may be susceptible to mpox infection

References

1. European Centres for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) - [Risk assessment: Monkeypox multi-country outbreak](#) (23 May 22)
2. Nigerian CDC National Monkeypox Public Health Response Guidelines - https://ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/docs/protocols/96_1577798337.pdf
3. US CDC - [Information for the clinical management of monkeypox](#)
4. US CDC - [2022 Monkeypox Outbreak Global Map | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
5. US CDC - [Monkeypox: Get the Facts](#)
6. WHO - [Monkeypox](#) factsheet
7. WHO - [Multi-country monkeypox outbreak in non-endemic countries](#)
8. WHO - [Laboratory testing for the monkeypox virus: Interim guidance](#)
9. WHO - [Meeting of the international health regulations \(2005\) emergency committee regarding the multi-country monkeypox outbreak](#)
10. WHO - [Director-General's statement on the report of the meeting of the IHR 2005 emergency committee regarding the multi-country monkeypox outbreak](#)
11. [WHO recommends new name for monkeypox disease](#)
12. [The Republic of Korea to Donate First Batch of Mpox Vaccine to Africa](#)