



WFP launches food assistance for Ebola-affected people in Democratic Republic of Congo

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MBANDAKA - Distributions of World Food Programme rations have begun in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s Ebola-hit Equateur Province as part of an effort to support those directly affected by the latest outbreak of the deadly virus and limit risky population movements.

Families of Ebola patients discharged from treatment centres, and of those who have had contact with them or suspected victims, are receiving up to three months' supplies of cereals and beans delivered by Oxfam, a WFP cooperating partner. A projected 1,000 people are to be immediately assisted. UNICEF is also providing food to those affected.

"The combined efforts of the government, the UN and NGOs are winning this battle, as the stemming of the number of Ebola cases shows", said Jose Barahona, Oxfam's DRC Country Director. "But we will continue working all out until the outbreak is well and truly over".

WFP has contributed to the aid effort since the Ebola crisis was declared a month ago, playing an active role in overall response coordination led by the DRC's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation.

As the UN's humanitarian logistics lead, WFP promptly deployed a dedicated expert to Mbandaka, Equateur's capital, to identify gaps and facilitate partner response.

The WFP-run United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operates daily flights between Kinshasa, Mbandaka and other urban centres in Equateur, ferrying humanitarian workers and cargo, including mobile laboratories and protection equipment.

A reconfigured UNHAS-chartered Mi-8 helicopter, equipped with a decontamination chamber and two isolation cells, can safely move infected patients or suspected cases from more remote locations.

“I am confident that this Ebola outbreak will soon be contained”, said Claude Jibidar, WFP’s DRC Country Director. “The response has been robust and rigorous, and is providing the appropriate care for those affected”.