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21 August 2024

LA(24)21

**TO: LABOUR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ALL FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

MONKEYPOX (MPOX) UPDATE 21 AUGUST 2024

Action required: Members are invited to note the information on Mpox and use the resources available. Any questions should be directed to the Secretariat (ondrilla.fernandes@ics-shipping.org and helio.vicente@ics-shipping.org).

Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the mpox outbreak in parts of Africa a public health emergency of international concern. The highly contagious disease - formerly known as monkeypox - has killed at least 450 people during an initial outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has now spread across parts of central and east Africa, and scientists are concerned about how fast a new variant of the disease is spreading and its high fatality rate.

Transmission, Symptoms and Prevention

Mpox is transmitted through close contact, such as sex, skin-to-skin contact and talking or breathing close to another person. Common symptoms include a skin rash or mucosal lesions lasting 2-4 weeks, fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes. The virus can also be transmitted to humans by contaminated materials, or infected animals.

Outbreaks can be controlled by preventing infections with vaccines, though these are usually only available for people at risk or those who have been in close contact with an infected person.

Types of Mpox

There are two main types of mpox - Clade 1 and Clade 2. A previous mpox public health emergency, declared in 2022, was caused by the relatively mild Clade 2. However, this time it is the far more deadly Clade 1 - which has killed up to 10% of those getting sick in previous outbreaks - that is surging. There was a change in the virus around September last year. Mutations led to an offshoot - called Clade 1b - that has since spread rapidly.

Impact

At least 12 African countries, including previously unaffected nations like Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, have reported Mpox outbreaks. So far in 2024, these countries have confirmed 2,863 cases and 517 deaths, primarily in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Suspected cases across the continent have surged past 17,000, a significant increase from 7,146 cases in 2022 and 14,957 cases in 2023. This is just the tip of the iceberg when we consider the many weaknesses in surveillance, laboratory testing and contact tracing. Additional information available [here](#).

Current news

Argentina quarantines cargo ship over suspected case of virus: Argentine authorities have quarantined a cargo ship in the Parana River over a suspected case of mpox onboard, as global public health authorities remain on alert for a new faster-spreading variant of the virus. Argentina has previously recorded eight cases of mpox, though none were the Clade 1b strain. The seafarer had been isolated from the rest of the crew and the ministry said public health emergency protocol had been activated. The vessel, which had been bound for the San Lorenzo port in the Santa Fe province, had to drop anchor in the river. Link to the article [here](#).

Resources Available

ICS Global Health Emergency Guide: Helping Shipping Companies Prepare, Act and Recover: The ICS Global Health Emergency Guide helps shipping companies to prepare, act and recover. It provides a comprehensive and practical framework for shipping companies to get ahead and prepare for any future global health emergency. Link attached [here](#). Below in Annex A is a poster from the guide that shipping companies can use to understand the symptoms, prevention, and treatment.

Mpox Strategic Preparedness, Readiness, and Response Plan: Mpox SPRP Global Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework, aims to monitor and report on global progress towards these objectives, including information about country-level response efforts and WHO support to Member States. Link available [here](#).

Further Actions

ICS has contacted the South African Permanent Representative to IMO (Mr Vusi September), to query if he is aware of any requirements that are specific to Shipping in ports, which he might be able to share with us. We will provide members with an update once we receive any further information.

Any questions should be directed to the Secretariat (ondrilla.fernandes@ics-shipping.org and helio.vicente@ics-shipping.org).

[LA\(24\)21 - Annex A Monkeypox \(Mpox\) Poster.pdf](#)

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