



## CDC finds Ebola in Uganda

### U.S. experts find Ebola Sudan virus in Uganda

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**GULU, UGANDA** — U.S. health experts arrived here Thursday and said they have identified a highly contagious hemorrhagic virus that has killed 41 people in Uganda as a strain last seen in 1979.

The six-member team from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta unloaded crates of supplies and a refrigerator from two small planes. The four epidemiologists and two microbiologists will help Ugandan health workers and World Health Organization experts in treating patients and containing the disease.

The CDC team said it has identified the virus as Ebola Sudan, a less deadly

strain than others, that last hit southern Sudan 21 years ago.

"We're here to help the Ministry of Health in Uganda deal with the epidemic," said Dr. Pierre Rollin, the CDC team leader.

CDC's diagnosis raises questions about whether Ugandan rebels based in neighboring Sudan may have inadvertently introduced the disease during regular attacks around Gulu.

The district is plagued by insecurity due to attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army. The LRA, which has bases in southern Sudan, has laid waste to northern Uganda for 13 years and kidnapped thousands of children to serve as porters and soldiers.

At a 66-year-old government hospital, nurses and doctors watched videos and attended lectures conducted by Simon Mardel, a WHO expert on hemorrhagic fevers.

"The priority for the next 48 hours will be to make this hospital very, very

safe," Mardel told about 300 workers in an overflowing canteen at the hospital.

Mardel, who was inspecting Gulu Hospital's Ebola ward, praised the measures already in place to stem the spread of the disease. With the arrival of additional equipment brought in later Thursday by international agencies, the hospital would be fully equipped, he said.

"Within the next 24 hours, this hospital will be the best place in Uganda, probably the best place in Africa, to treat Ebola patients," Mardel said.

The hospital, a sprawling complex of beige concrete buildings with rusting tin roofs, has been treating 45 people who are suspected of having Ebola.

The smell of disinfectant wafted across the hospital grounds as nurses dressed in surgical gear and heavy black rubber boots moved in and out of the Ebola ward. Anyone leaving the building was sprayed with bleach to kill the virus on their clothing.

Mardel arrived Wednesday with three

other WHO experts, bringing the protective gear needed to keep doctors and nurses from contracting the disease. In the early days of the outbreak, one doctor and two nurses died after treating the first patients.

Dr. Michael Ryan, a WHO medical officer, said the main priority was getting the hospital safe by preventing the virus spreading from infected people.

Ugandan health officials said Thursday that the outbreak was restricted to Gulu, a town of 150,000 people some 225 miles north of the capital, and had not spread to other districts.

Ebola is spread through bodily contact with a victim who has developed symptoms of the disease or has died from it.

About four days after contracting the virus, the victim develops a headache, fever and chest pains. In the later stages, the virus begins to attack internal organs, causing bloody diarrhea and vomiting. Eighty to 90 percent of Ebola victims

die of the disease within two weeks of infection.

Researchers do not know what causes Ebola outbreaks, which are often years and hundreds of miles apart. The virus is believed to be carried by some animals and insects, which live with the virus. Ebola then makes the jump into an initial victim, who then spreads the disease in a community.

Ebola usually kills its victims faster than it can spread, burning out before it can reach too far.

The outbreak in Gulu is the first time the disease has been found in Uganda. The virus is named after the Ebola river in Congo, where the first cases were recorded in 1976. It has also been recorded in Sudan, Ivory Coast and Gabon.

The first Ebola victim in the Uganda outbreak is believed to have died on Sept. 17. Esther Awete was found dead in her mud hut and since then her mother, three sisters and three other relatives have died.

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Three Americans injured in suicide bombing in Sri Lanka

**COLOMBO, SRI LANKA (AP)** — A suicide bomber blew himself up Thursday and injured 23 people, including three American women, near the home of Sri Lanka's president shortly before her new Cabinet was sworn in.

The bomber died on the spot, according to Dr. Hector Weerasinghe, director of the National Hospital. He said two of the women were not seriously hurt, but he was worried about the third, who had a chest wound. The U.S. Embassy confirmed three Americans were injured, but gave no details.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga was herself blinded in the right eye by a suicide bomber on Dec. 18.

#### Senate approves bill easing sanctions on Cuba

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A bill sent to President Clinton would ease the decades-old embargo on Cuba, provide \$3.6 billion in aid to farmers and allow for the import of cheaper prescription drugs.

The Senate Wednesday approved the \$78 billion agricultural spending bill 86-8, despite misgivings by many lawmakers about whether the Cuba and drug-import measures will do much good. Clinton has agreed to sign the legislation.

#### Carbon dioxide test leads to discovery of illegal immigrants in U.S.-bound ship

**HONG KONG (AP)** — Inspectors discovered 26 illegal immigrants from mainland China hiding in a shipping container bound for the United States after instruments showed carbon dioxide emanating from the container, authorities said Thursday.

The men got into the container in Hong Kong and were due to be shipped out Friday en route to Long Beach, Calif., Customs and Excise Department spokesman Peter Tiu said.

The container was in a terminal waiting to be loaded onto a ship when authorities found the 26 men inside by using a carbon dioxide detector Wednesday night. The men had suffered no injuries and had basic necessities, including drinks, canned food and instant noodles.

The immigrants were believed to have come from mainland China's Fujian Province.

#### Lead singer of Rage Against the Machine quits

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Rage Against the Machine lead singer Zack De La Rocha has quit the incendiary rock band after nine years, saying there was a failure to communicate among his bandmates.

"I feel that it is now necessary to leave Rage because our decision-making process has completely failed," De La Rocha said in a statement released Wednesday.

The band has used its music to rally against social and political injustices, and bring attention to sweatshop labor, political prisoners within the United States and the movement for democracy in Mexico. A Rage concert outside the Staples Center led to a rowdy disturbance during the Democratic National Convention in August.

Since the band released its third album, "The Battle of Los Angeles," last November, it fired two managers and canceled its planned Rhyme and Reason tour.

## USS Cole bombing investigation spreads to Saudi Arabia

BY SALAH NASRAWI  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**ADEN, YEMEN** — Investigators have widened their probe into the bombing of the USS Cole to Saudi Arabia and to a far eastern Yemeni province, Yemeni officials said Thursday, as rescuers recovered the final four sets of remains of sailors killed in the blast.

The remains removed from the ship Thursday will be flown home soon, Navy officials in Washington said. Thirteen bodies already have been flown back to the United States.

The recovery of the remains came as FBI director Louis Freeh arrived in Yemen, held talks with President Ali Abdullah Saleh and toured the U.S. warship, which was attacked Oct. 12 as it arrived to refuel.

The FBI director told a news conference it was far too early to speculate who may have sponsored or be responsible for the bombing, which killed 17 sailors and injured 39. "We are looking at this with an open mind," he said.

Saleh, in an interview with CNN, said "it could be" when asked if Osama Bin-Laden was behind the attack on the USS Cole. He also said it was possible that "elements from Afghanistan" were involved.

Freeh would not commit to that possibility. He said determining exactly who carried out the attack "will be governed by facts and forensics," adding that "we are far from making even preliminary judgments on this."

He said the FBI is supporting Yemen's investigation in a "junior" role and complimented Yemeni authorities' police work in the case.

Yemeni security officials said Thursday that a search earlier this week of an Aden apartment where bomb-making equipment was found also yielded documents they believe originated in Hadhramaut, an eastern Yemeni province. A vehicle believed used by the attackers also contained documents traced to Hadhramaut, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

They said investigators were dispatched Thursday to Hadhramaut, seeking more information to try to identify two men who used the Aden apartment and who have not been seen since the bombing.

Hadhramaut, a conservative region along the eastern border with Oman, is home to lawless tribes that have kidnapped foreigners for ransom.

Yemeni officials said another team of investigators was going to neighboring Saudi Arabia on Thursday. The officials provided no information on the leads that took them there. Many Yemenis from Hadhramaut have settled in Saudi Arabia.

Investigators also were questioning the owner of a welding shop who had done welding for the suspects, security officials said without elaborating.

The landlord of the Aden apartment and a real estate agent who found the apartment for the two men also have been questioned.

Yemeni officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, identified the possible suspects only as non-Yemeni Arabs.

A 12-year-old Yemeni boy told authorities that a bearded man wearing glasses gave him small change and told him to watch his car near the port on the day of the bombing. Saleh said Wednesday on the popular Arab satellite news station Al-Jazeera.

According to the child, the man then took to the sea in a rubber boat he had carried atop the car and did not return, Saleh said. Yemeni police were apparently able to trace the man back to the apartment.

Officials believe a small rubber boat packed with explosives was maneuvered next to the Cole by two suicide bombers and then detonated.

At a tearful service in Norfolk, Va., President Clinton mourned the dead and sternly warned those who organized the attack.

"You will not find a safe harbor, for we will find you and justice will prevail," he said Wednesday.

Sailors aboard the Cole had held a small memorial Sunday. On Wednesday, they continued bailing water from the crippled vessel and searching for the bodies of four crew members still missing.

The apparent death toll of 17 in the bombing, for which no one has claimed responsibility, makes it the deadliest terrorist attack on the U.S. military since the 1996 bombing of an Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia that killed 19.

In Washington, Gen. Anthony Zinni, who was commander in chief of U.S. Central Command at the time the Pentagon contracted for refueling services in Aden in December 1998, took responsibility for the decision to send the ship there.

"I pass that buck on to nobody," Zinni told a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. He said the Yemeni coastline is a "sieve" for terrorists but was the best option available for refueling Navy ships in the volatile region.

There has been no claim of responsibility for the Cole bombing that is considered credible.

Thursday, the London-based newspaper Al Hayat published a statement by Egyptian militant leader Rifai Ahmed Taha citing the Cole explosion and calling for more attacks on U.S. interests.

"Our soldiers, officers and sons in Egypt should learn a lesson from the American destroyer in Aden, since they have the Suez Canal before their eyes where dozens of American Jewish ships cross," said the statement attributed to Taha.

Taha's al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, or Islamic Group, is held responsible for the 1997 massacre of Western tourists in Luxor, Egypt. Taha now is believed in hiding in Afghanistan with Osama bin-Laden, a Saudi dissident of Yemeni descent. Bin-Laden is accused in the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people.

## Palestinian gunmen fire on Israelis in West Bank

BY RON KAMPEAS  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**JERUSALEM** — Israeli troops seeking to rescue stranded settlers on an outing waged a deadly battle with Palestinian gunmen for five hours Thursday on a rocky West Bank hill. The fighting threatened to scuttle a U.S.-brokered cease-fire after only a day.

One settler bled to death waiting for army rescuers who couldn't breach the heavy gunfire on Mount Ebal overlooking Nablus, security officials said. A Palestinian was killed early in the battle.

At least 10 others were wounded, five settlers and five Palestinians, and army rescue helicopters succeeded in evacuating only two settlers. The wounded were in moderate to serious condition, said settlers who took cover under continued heavy gunfire.

Palestinians said the settlers, who were on an outing under army escort, fired first. But an Israeli army spokesman blamed the Palestinians, saying the Palestinian Authority's failure to order back the gunmen was a "flagrant violation" of this week's cease-fire.

"There's been no attempt by the Palestinian Authority to stop this firing against innocent hikers, children, women. They're stuck at the moment without food, without anything," Col. Raanan Gissin told The Associated Press.

Two army attack helicopters hovered over the scene, and armored personnel carriers were ready to move in. Settlers called on the army to un-

leash the "full power" of the attack helicopters, an apparent reference to anti-tank missiles.

Gissin said the army was resisting such calls, and allowing the helicopters to fire only their machine-guns because the gunbattle was taking place next to a refugee camp.

"Since it's a densely populated refugee camp, we were very careful," he said.

The use of missiles would greatly endanger the cease-fire extracted by President Clinton through two sleepless days of negotiations in Egypt earlier this week. Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had warned that a collapse could lead to a wider regional war.

Each side had widely differing accounts of how the battle started. The settlers, numbering about 40, had prior permission from the Israeli army to climb the hill, known locally as "the accursed mountain," so they could observe the fate of Joseph's Tomb, a holy site evacuated by Israeli troops under fire two weeks ago.

They said Palestinian gunmen from the nearby Askar refugee camp opened fire on the group, without provocation.

"Under fire for five hours straight," said settler Elazar Mizrahi, speaking to Channel Two TV from a cellphone, the staccato of automatic fire audible in the background. "There are still gunshots. Hiding. Others 30 meters from me. We came to tour the area. I'm hiding behind a rock. I can't leave here."

Gissin confirmed the army had given permission, and said it would

investigate who exactly gave it and why. Such outings had been banned due to the violence.

Palestinians said the battle broke out when settlers descended the hill toward the refugee camp and opened fire on Palestinians harvesting olives, without provocation.

Gissin insisted the settlers, some of whom were armed, never used their guns, and that the four soldiers who accompanied them only returned fire.

The battle erupted as Israelis and Palestinians were both taking steps to build up goodwill after the Egyptian summit, brokered with assistance from Jordan, the United Nations and the European Union in addition to the efforts of Clinton and Mubarak.

The 48-hour deadline for a total cease-fire was set by negotiators and due to expire a midday Friday. If upheld, it was to have led to a two-week recovery program aimed at getting negotiators back to the table after the recent wave of violence. More than 100 people have died, all but about 10 of them Palestinians.

Israeli authorities have already lifted an internal closure on Palestinian areas, which allowed Palestinians to resume travel between towns inside the West Bank and Gaza.

They have also opened border crossings to Egypt and Jordan, and goods again have started to flow between Gaza and Israel. The Palestinians also were allowed to reopen their airport in Gaza after a 10-day closure.

## Umbilical cord blood transplant met with success by ailing girl

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**MINNEAPOLIS** — Doctors declared success Wednesday in the groundbreaking case of an ailing 6-year-old girl who received a transplant of umbilical cord blood from her made-to-order baby brother.

Molly Nash of Englewood, Colo., received the blood three weeks ago in hopes it would save her life. The girl suffers from Fanconi anemia, a rare genetic disorder that prevented her body from making bone marrow.

Dr. John Wagner of the University of Minnesota said tests showed the transplant is working. He said the infused cells are taking over the functions of Molly's bone marrow, making platelets and disease-fighting white blood cells.

"The bone marrow graft is recovering extremely well," he said. "So we have a success."

Wagner said he expects Molly to

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Lisa Nash  
Mother of patient

be released from the hospital within a week, and doctors will closely follow her over the next two months. While she is not out of the woods, she now has a good chance at a normal life, the doctor said.

Molly's brother, Adam, was born through test-tube fertilization over the summer after his parents genetically screened and selected an embryo to make sure he would be free of Molly's disease and would be a suitable tissue donor.

It was the first known case in which parents created a baby genetically selected to help save a sibling's life.

Molly's mother, Lisa Nash, said Molly loves to dance, but hadn't felt like dancing for around six months, until now.

"The other night, she and I were playing in her room and a song came on and she got on the floor and started dancing," she said. "And that was when we knew that this was the right thing to have done."

Without the transplant, Fanconi anemia would almost certainly kill Molly by the time she is 35, if not decades sooner, because was unable to create her own bone marrow.