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## B-FAST facilitates the development of vaccines against the Bundibugyo Ebola virus in the DRC

Since the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak was confirmed in May 2026 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Belgium has been closely monitoring the situation. As part of this effort, our country is supporting research into vaccines and treatments, among other initiatives.

In this context, a large-scale clinical trial recently began in Bunia (DRC), coordinated by the Congolese Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale (INRB) and the Global Health Institute at the University of Antwerp, and conducted by an international consortium of partners. The Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp (ITM) is leading the laboratory activities, the analysis of immune responses following vaccination, and the social science research into factors that may influence participation in clinical trials and the subsequent rollout of vaccines.

To support these scientific efforts, the Ministry of Defence, through B-FAST, is providing an A400M transport aircraft and logistical expertise to transport a mobile laboratory to Bunia. This laboratory will be used to conduct clinical trials and analyse samples, thereby contributing to the development of a safe and effective vaccine. This operation is made possible with the support and coordination of the European Union through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

Belgium is also supporting the response through various other channels, including humanitarian aid, cooperation with multilateral partners, the development agency Enabel, as well as Belgian NGOs present in Ituri and the Kivu provinces, where they contribute to prevention, risk communication, community engagement, and the strengthening of local health services.

*B-FAST (Belgian First Aid & Support Team) is the structure of the federal government that is activated when providing emergency aid abroad and consists of the FPS Home Affairs, the FPS Policy and Support (BOSA), the FPS Public Health, the Ministry of Defence and the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, in which the Prime Minister's Office is also involved.*

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