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Cuba has maintained strict international disease control for many years, thus minimizing the risks for the entry and spread of communicable or newly reported diseases, say local health authorities.

Epidemiologist Niurka Molina, head of the Public Health Ministry's (MINSAP) Department for International Disease Control, said all the necessary measures have been adopted to prevent the possible introduction in Cuba of Ebola virus, currently affecting four West African countries.

Molina explained that there is strict surveillance on passengers arriving in the country, both at ports and airports, while close contact is maintained with Cuban medical staff abroad, particularly those rendering their services in countries currently affected by the Ebola outbreak.

Control actions are in place on Cuban medical brigades before travelling, while a weekly report keeps a record of the condition of health personnel abroad, as well as dates of arrival in Cuba for their care in primary healthcare units.

Passengers from Africa, Southeast Asia, South and Central America, and the Caribbean get special supervision, largely in a watch for possible symptoms of malaria and other diseases.

However, specialists insist on the need to reinforce personal hygiene and preventive measures.

No Ebola case has so far been reported in Cuba.

Manuel Santín, the National Epidemiology Director at MINSAP, noted that the spreading of the virus in West Africa is largely due to the high numbers of people moving across borders, deficiencies in the identification and monitoring of infected persons, poor prevention and control measures, and undetected chains of transmission.

There are no direct flights between Cuba and the Ebola-hit countries, he stressed; yet, the virus could be introduced into the country through third passengers, mainly those who travel by plane. Consequently, prevention measures and efforts have been maximized to act immediately should a case be detected, Santín emphasized.