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Sent Help To Sierra Leone To Fight Ebola: UN Nuclear Agency

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said its specialised technology could make a "small but effective contribution" to combat an outbreak that has killed 4,950 people, mostly in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

Countries from the United States to China and Cuba have deployed resources and health personnel in a U.N.-led aid surge.

The IAEA says a nuclear-derived diagnostic technology known as Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) allows Ebola to be detected using fluorescent markers within a few hours. The equipment in its original form had used radioactive isotope markers.

Other methods of detecting Ebola require growing on a cell culture for several days.

An IAEA spokesman said a shipment of an RT-PCR machine left for Sierra Leone on Sunday, without giving further detail.

"We are currently in communication with Liberia, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) and Guinea to identify their specific needs," Alexander Nitzsche added in an email.