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WHO confirms DR Congo Ebola-free status

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The DRC outbreak, which began in August, involved a different strain of Ebola from the one that has claimed more than 5,400 lives in west Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo is now considered free of Ebola transmission, the UN health agency said in a statement.

The all-clear for the country, where 66 people were infected, came after twice the 21-day incubation period had passed with no new cases detected. DRC had declared itself Ebola-free nearly a week ago, but WHO said the country's seventh outbreak of the deadly virus was officially over only on Thursday.

The outbreak raging in west Africa stems from the Zaire species - the deadliest of the five known distinct species - which caused the world's first known Ebola outbreak in 1976 in what is now known as the DRC. Until now that outbreak was the deadliest on record, with 280 deaths. The disease takes its name from the DRC's Ebola River.