China Opens First High-Tech Biosafety Lab to Study Ebola

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The center is located in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, and is the first one in the country with the highest level-4 biosafety standards built with French help.

Though 10 Chinese research centers are already involved in Ebola research, especially on diagnosis techniques and vaccines, the current center will allow the study of live Ebola virus.

“The laboratory fills the domestic void, provides conditions for research on the Ebola virus and bright our fight against the virus from Africa to domestic laboratories,” National Health and Family Planning Commission Minister Li Bin was quoted as saying by China Daily.

The director of the new institute, Yuan Zhiming, said that without a biosafety level-4 laboratory, there was no option of experimenting with live viruses or to test viruses on animals.

So far, Ebola research in China has involved using individual genes or proteins, Yuan added.

Approval for the laboratory was given by the Chinese government in 2003, after an outbreak of avian flu, however its construction began only in 2011.

French experts collaborated in designing the center, establishing security standards and training staff.

“The brand new lab in Wuhan, as one of the country’s large-scale science facilities, will play an important role in our public health defense system”, according to de Chinese Academy of

Sciences President, Bai Chunli.

On top of that, the new lab “will be an indispensable technology platform for the global prevention and control of infectious diseases,” he stressed.