

Nightmare Scenario: Ebola 'Could Become Airborne'

Ashoka Mukpu, an American cameraman covering the Ebola outbreak in Liberia for NBC News, is the latest U.S. citizen stricken with the deadly Ebola virus.

Mukpu and his news crew are being flown home to the United States, where they will be quarantined.

Meanwhile, as the outbreak continues to rage, the government response both in Africa and the United States has been slow and questionable.

The disease has already killed more than 3,000 people in Africa, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there could be as many as 1.4 million cases of Ebola by January.

Save the Children reports that Ebola is spreading at the rate of five new cases an hour in Sierra Leone.

Anthony Banbury, chief of the United Nations Ebola mission, admits that the international community has been "a bit late" to respond to the epidemic.

There are also worries Ebola could become airborne and spread in the United States and around the world through travel and other means.

"The longer it moves around in human hosts in the virulent melting pot that is West Africa, the more chances increase that it could mutate," Banbury told the Telegraph. "It is a nightmare scenario [that it could become airborne], and unlikely, but it can't be ruled out."

Meanwhile, health officials are investigating how many people Thomas Eric Duncan—the first ever confirmed case of Ebola on

American soil—might have infected.

A Dallas emergency room nurse sent Duncan home despite showing symptoms and admitting that he had traveled from West Africa.

Duncan's nephew called the CDC after he was turned away from the hospital.

"I was terrified, scared, worried," Duncan's nephew, Joe Weeks, said.

The CDC has issued a nationwide alert to all hospitals in the United States on how to respond appropriately to possible cases of the deadly virus.

But experts are confident that U.S. medical procedures will keep Ebola from running wild here.

"The only fatal part of it may be the guy whose treatment was delayed, but it is not likely to result in anything else that is catastrophic or fatal," Dallas-based Dr. Joseph McCormick said.

Duncan's family is being quarantined under armed guard in their Dallas apartment.

"They can't come out. They are not even allowed to come on the porch," property manager Sally Nuran said.

Meanwhile, CBN's Operation Blessing remains on the ground in Liberia, providing supplies and working with area churches to teach people about prevention and treatment.