

SHAMONDA VIRUS DISINFORMATION: FACT SHEET

UNCLASSIFIED | NON CLASSIFIÉ

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CONTEXT

A video circulating on social media claimed that a Ukrainian laboratory in Lviv has been conducting gain-of-function experiments on Shamonda virus. According to the video—attributed to the ‘Foundation to Battle Injustice’—defective ventilation systems released a mutated strain capable of spreading between humans, causing severe neurological disease and killing up to 40 per cent of those infected. It claims that an anonymous German epidemiologist supposedly provided insider evidence, while Ukrainian authorities were accused of concealing 50 infections. The video demanded immediate European border closures and travel bans against Ukraine.

None of these allegations are supported by verifiable evidence and several claims run counter to established biological facts.

SHAMONDA VIRUS: EUROPEAN 2026 OUTBREAK

Shamonda virus is vector-borne livestock pathogen first detected in the 1960s in Nigeria. It is a member of the genus *Orthobunyavirus*, and is spread by *Culicoides* biting midges. During the Spring and Summer of 2026 an outbreak of Shamonda virus was identified in European cattle.¹ The European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) has detected the virus in farms in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Jersey.² Impacts of the virus on livestock include fever, reduced milk production, mild respiratory impairment and spontaneous abortion. Further cases have been documented in horses, goats, alpacas and sheep.

KEY MESSAGE 1

There is no known orthobunyavirus that transmits between humans by the respiratory route and every member of the Simbu serogroup (of which Shamonda is one) requires an insect vector for transmission. There is no characterised biological route by which Shamonda virus spreads from person to person by respiratory droplets.

In September 2026 the first documented³ human case of Shamonda Virus was reported by French authorities in the journal *Eurosurveillance*.⁴ The case involved a severely immunosuppressed individual in their 60s who died several weeks following stem cell transplantation. The patient’s cerebrospinal fluid tested positive for the European SHAV-EU1 Clade in keeping with the known viral genome found in cattle samples. The presumed transmission event is a midge-bite near the patient’s home in a rural area of France. At present no other human cases have been reported. The working hypothesis to explain the unique human case is that the patient’s severe immunocompromise facilitated transmission from an insect bite. The neurological manifestations of the human case were deemed consistent with Oropuche Virus (OROV), the closest viral relative known to affect humans. It is currently unclear whether the virus caused or contributed to the individual’s death.

KEY MESSAGE 2

Only one case of Shamonda virus has ever been detected in humans (September 2026).

This has been well documented by French authorities, with open access reporting of the viral genome and extensive clinical data in the journal *Eurosurveillance*. There is no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

THE FOUNDATION TO BATTLE INJUSTICE (R-FBI)

The Foundation to Battle Injustice (R-FBI) is a self-described human rights NGO established by Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin. While presenting itself as an independent non-profit organisation defending human rights and civic activism, it has been implicated in information operations targeting Ukraine, Moldova and France.⁵ In July 2025, the European Union imposed sanctions on the foundation as part of wider measures targeting “entities responsible for Russia’s destabilising actions abroad, including through Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI).”⁶

R-FBI has circulated allegations about Ukrainian laboratories since at least 2022. Its publications have accused Ukrainian authorities of conducting experiments on children, carrying out forced impregnation of women,⁷ and operating secret military medical facilities.⁸ It has also made unfounded allegations reprising debunked allegations connecting Hunter Biden to misappropriated military assistance involving biological laboratories.⁹

REFERENCES

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Enquiries should be directed to GPWMD.CounterDisinfo@gmail.com