



INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF UGANDA

STATEMENT ON THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK IN UGANDA

Fellow Ugandans,

Greetings from the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda!

By now you are already aware of the outbreak of yet another epidemic, the Ebola virus disease after a case of the Sudan strain was confirmed in Mubende district and declared on 20th September 2022 by the Ministry of Health.

According to recent updates from the Ministry of Health, a total of 54 cases have been reported with a total of 1,110 contacts confirmed and 37 Cumulative deaths.

We commiserate with the families that have lost their dear ones in such circumstances, particularly the health workers. May the Almighty rest their souls in peace.

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda's leadership applauds the efforts made by the government of Uganda and its partners, and in particular, the Ministry of health in helping to control the spread of the epidemic.

As we face the reality of the disease, we call upon the public to note that **Ebola is real, has no cure and kills. Ebola should be understood from the scientific rather than mystical or spiritual perspectives.**

How it is spread?

It spreads between humans by direct contact with bodily fluids and contaminated environments. This can only happen when someone gets in direct contact with an infected patient’s blood or bodily fluids, including saliva, urine, sweat, faeces, vomit, or semen. It can be spread through clothes/linens contaminated with bodily fluids, contact with some wild animals for example, bats, monkeys, and apes.

Signs/ Symptoms of Ebola

Ebola presents signs and symptoms such as fever, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, severe headache, sore throat, cough, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, unexplained bruising, internal and external bleeding such as bleeding from gums and bloody stool, weight loss and abdominal pain.

Treatment

Apparently, Ebola has no treatment or vaccine, especially the Sudan strain. However, in the absence of real treatment and vaccines, supportive care is key to fighting the virus. Health workers treat the symptoms including, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, as well as internal and external bleeding. Suspected and confirmed cases receive fluids and oxygen, body salts etc., and their blood and cardiac parameters are monitored. The good news is that whether or not other treatments are available, basic intervention can significantly improve the chances of survival when provided early enough. However, one out of two of the infected persons dies in case of delayed introduction to treatment and medical management.

We commit to mobilize our networks in support of education and mass campaigns to raise awareness on the epidemic and educate the public on the different modes of transmission and prevention.

Our special appeal to mitigate the spread of the epidemic;

- As religious leaders, we, call upon the public to be vigilant and report any suspected cases of Ebola or persons who present the above signs and symptoms, to the nearest health facility. If you think you have been exposed to Ebola, minimize close contact with others.
- We appeal to the general public to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures set by the Ministry of Health and the district task forces’ guidelines in the fight against the epidemic.
- We call upon faith communities/ religious leaders to utilize the places of worship as sources of information while ensuring the provision of hand-washing facilities.

- Finally, we call upon the Government of Uganda to strengthen the health surveillance and response system.
- We further call upon government to build a resilient and well-equipped health workforce that is able to rapidly respond to such emergencies.
- In light of such emergencies, we call upon all local leaders, civil society organizations and faith communities to support government efforts to sensitize the public to adhere to standard operating procedures.

Conclusion

We continue to serve as messengers and agents of change; inspire communities to care for and love one another and avoid barriers to good health our communities. We pledge to ensure that religious leaders have the necessary information to support the promotion of social and religious practices that may contribute to the eradication of the Ebola virus.

The Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Samuel Kaziimba Mugalu

**Archbishop Church of Uganda
Chairperson, Council of Presidents,
Inter-Religious Council of Uganda**

For and on behalf of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda