

**Inter-Religious Council of Uganda**

 Religions for Peace

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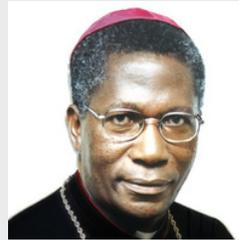
# PRESS RELEASE

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16 November, 2022

Ebola Faith-Based response

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**"Unleashing the power of Faith communities against Ebola"**

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**INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF UGANDA  
STATEMENT ON THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE  
OUTBREAK IN UGANDA**

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**Supported by the United Nations Development Program  
and Religions for Peace International**



 Religions for Peace

Fellow Ugandans,

Greetings from the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda!

Since September 2022, our nation has hitherto been facing an unprecedented Ebola virus disease outbreak, with a total of 140 cumulative cases registered of which 55 have died while 70 people have recovered as reported by the Ministry of Health. We commiserate with the families that have lost their dear ones in such circumstances, particularly the health workers. May the Almighty God rest their souls in peace.

As religious leaders, we are deeply concerned about the Ebola outbreak and saddened by the suffering and loss of life it is inflicting on our people. We are mindful of the serious humanitarian, social and economic impacts on our country, and of the potential for this impact to expand.

Fellow Ugandans, this pandemic is not yet under control. Current indicators show that it is getting worse, and it is expected to continue to spread. This significant increase in cases is extremely worrying as is the widening geographic scope, and the community deaths occurring outside of the health care system. Sadly, with a lockdown in some communities, livelihoods are likely to collapse hence disrupting a vibrant communal, social, and business life.

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda leadership would like to acknowledge the relentless efforts made by the government of Uganda and partners, and particularly the Ministry of Health, in providing leadership, guidance, and support to the nation. As the Ebola Virus disease continues to spread, we will not stand idly by and observe our nation being overwhelmed by this health catastrophe.

In hindsight, this was exactly what happened in the 1970s and 80s when disruptive and horrendous wars and extrajudicial killings tore apart our country, leaving many innocent civilians scraping for a living as refugees in neighboring countries. Unfortunately, this time the enemy is not one who can be summoned to the table for peace talks. What we have here is an enemy who is mercilessly lethal and deadly. We, therefore, 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.

We, therefore, commit to mobilize and activating our faith-based networks and structures to support education and mass campaigns to raise awareness on the causes, symptoms, spread, prevention, and treatment of the Ebola pandemic.

**Our commitment and appeal to mitigate the spread of the epidemic;**

1. 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 contact with others.

2. 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.
3. We appeal to the Ministry of Health to establish a clear coordinating mechanism to enable the different stakeholders with high interest to make their contribution in order to maximize on merge resources and limit duplication.
4. We commit to provide the necessary tools and knowledge to our local religious leaders to facilitate informed sermons and talk to communities in ways that are not only rooted in faith principles, but promote trust, care, reduce fear and tackle stigma.
5. We commit to utilize our existing platforms to educate communities about Ebola, how it spreads, and how to engage with those who have been affected by it. It is our hope that proper education and sensitization will improve the referral of potential cases, reduce fear and stigma, and capacitate communities with knowledge to promote safe practices for burials and religious rites in the context of Ebola.
6. We call upon partners to support one another as communities face increased impoverishment due to the collapse of livelihoods, increased food prices, the breakdown of markets and the closure of the school system.
7. We commit to harness the knowledge of health practitioners in the fight against the Ebola virus disease and adopt a multi-pronged approach as the nation struggles to contain the deadly outbreak.
8. We pledge to engage the government and advocate for the equipping of the insolation centers with basic facilities and medicines so as to promote trust among the ebola patients to seek treatment, remain at the centers and complete their treatment.

### **Conclusion**

We continue to serve as messengers and agents of change; inspire communities to care for and love one another and avoid unsafe practices to good health in their 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 disease in Uganda. Our collective effort during the COVID-19 pandemic taught us the values of solidarity, community support, humility, love, and kindness. We, therefore, welcome all support from Government and partners to enable us to make swift, comprehensive and effective interventions to halt the spread of the disease and address the public health crisis.

**Issued this 16th day of November 2022**



Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda

**Presiding Apostle Born Again Faith in Uganda**

**CO-Chair IRCU Council of Presidents**

**FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF UGANDA**