



**STATEMENT BY H.E PRESIDENT MATAMELA CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
ON THE EBOLA OUTBREAKS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND
UGANDA AND THE GROWING RISK OF REGIONAL SPREAD**

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In my capacity as African Union Champion on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, I commend the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda for their swift leadership and transparency in declaring the Ebola Virus Disease outbreaks of the Bundibugyo strain in Ituri Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Kampala, Uganda, following laboratory confirmation. Early detection, rapid reporting and decisive action remain critical to containing outbreaks before they escalate into a wider regional crisis.

We stand in solidarity with the Governments and peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, particularly affected communities and frontline health workers. I also commend neighbouring countries that have moved rapidly to strengthen preparedness, cross-border surveillance and emergency coordination.

I further commend the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, under the leadership of the Director General, Dr Jean Kaseya, working together with the World Health Organisation, for its rapid support to affected countries, regional coordination efforts and mobilisation of partners around a unified continental response, building on the successful continental incident management model deployed during the mpox response. I also welcome the efforts of national authorities, Africa CDC, the World Health Organisation and partners to strengthen surveillance, laboratory systems, contact tracing, infection prevention and control, risk communication, case management and access to appropriate medical countermeasures.

I call on the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda to sustain strong political leadership and continue working closely with frontline responders and communities in an environment of trust and transparency to stop these outbreaks at their source and prevent further spread.

Ebola does not respect borders. In a region marked by high population mobility, insecurity and humanitarian movement, the risk of regional spread is significant and demands urgent, coordinated action. I therefore urge affected and at-risk countries to intensify cross-border collaboration, strengthen surveillance at formal and informal points of entry, and ensure rapid information sharing, particularly in areas affected by insecurity and population displacement. As the chair of the Global Leaders Network for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, I make a special plea to ensure that women, children and adolescents' are not left behind and that routine services do not backslide as we handle this crisis.

These outbreaks are also a reminder that, despite the decline in Official Development Assistance, Africa must continue investing — including through increased domestic financing — in resilient public health systems and regional health security architecture. Preparedness

requires sustained investment in national public health institutes, emergency operations centres, laboratory and genomic surveillance networks, trained health workforce and rapid response capabilities.

I therefore call on African Union Member States and international partners to strengthen support for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response through timely financing, technical assistance, medical countermeasures and direct support to affected communities. Solidarity must translate into concrete action.

As African Union Champion on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, I will continue working with the African Union Commission, Heads of State and Government, Africa CDC and partners to ensure that Africa's response remains coordinated, adequately financed and anchored in the principles of solidarity, health security and sovereignty.

The peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the wider region must not face this threat alone. Africa has the experience, institutions and resolve to contain these outbreaks. What is required now is urgency, unity and collective action.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA