

Statement



US Travel Restrictions Related to the *Bundibugyo Ebola Outbreak*

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | 19 May 2026

The United States remains a longstanding and valued partner of Africa in disease surveillance, emergency response, workforce development, and global health security. In March 2025, following major shifts affecting USAID and other health programs, Africa CDC engaged the U.S. Government through a high-level dialogue at the U.S. Department of State involving multiple American agencies. [Meeting Africa CDC - US team](#) Africa CDC advocated for a new partnership model based on sovereignty, shared responsibility, and sustainability — one in which the US increasingly support direct country funding while African governments progressively increase domestic co-financing for their health systems and health security priorities.

Since then, Africa's Health Security and Sovereignty has increasingly framed the continent's strategic approach. This was further reinforced through a consensus reached by the African High-Level Ministerial Committee on Global Health Architecture, which brought together 48 African ministers from all five regions of the continent on 17 May 2026 in Geneva. Ministers agreed that future strategic negotiations related to continental health security partnerships should increasingly be coordinated through a "Team Africa" approach, working through and with Africa CDC to ensure solidarity, coherence, and strategic alignment.

From the earliest stages of the current Ebola outbreak, Africa CDC acted rapidly, transparently, and responsibly. Following

confirmation that at least two countries were affected, Africa CDC exercised its continental mandate to declare this outbreak on 15 May 2026, elevating political attention and accelerating coordination across Africa. Since the beginning of the outbreak, Africa CDC has maintained continuous information sharing with Member States, partners, media, and the international community.

Africa CDC takes note of the decision by the United States Government to issue a Level 4 "Do Not Travel" advisory for the DRC and to impose entry restrictions affecting non-U.S. passport holders who have recently travelled to the DRC, Uganda, or South Sudan.

Africa CDC fully recognizes the sovereign responsibility of every government to protect the health and security of its people. Our concern is not with the objective of protecting populations, but with the use of broad travel restrictions as a primary public health tool during outbreaks.

Public health measures during outbreaks must be guided by science, proportionality, transparency, international cooperation, and the International Health Regulations. Africa CDC's experience from previous outbreaks has shown that broad travel restrictions and border closures often provide limited public health benefit while creating significant economic, humanitarian, and operational consequences.

“The fastest path to protecting all countries in the World is to aggressively support outbreak control at the source,” said H.E. Dr. Jean Kaseya, DG Africa CDC. “Global health security cannot be achieved through borders alone. It is achieved through partnership, trust, science, and rapid investment in preparedness and response capacity.”

This current Ebola outbreak highlights a deeper structural injustice in global health innovation: Bundibugyo Ebolavirus was identified nearly two decades ago, yet no licensed vaccines or therapeutics specific to this strain exist today. Many African leaders believe that if this disease had predominantly threatened wealthier regions of the world, medical countermeasures would likely already be available.

The world witnessed a similar reality during the West African Ebola outbreak, when solutions were disclosed following infections among an American doctor Kent Brantly, while thousands of Africans had already died without support <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/349256514>.

The world must not repeat the same mistake today.

The declaration of the PHECS on 18 May 2026 [Africa CDC Official Website](#) was intended to mobilize political leadership, resources, and coordinated continental action. It is not a signal for panic, but a call for solidarity, urgency, and collective responsibility.

Africa CDC is calling for intensified international support to rapidly:

- Strengthen cross-border preparedness and regional coordination;
- Sustain o frontline health workers and Ministries of Health leading the response.
- Scale-up risk communication and community engagement to build trust and support early detection and care-seeking.
- Expand Bundibugyo Ebolavirus laboratory diagnostics and genomic sequencing;

- Deploy epidemiologists and emergency response experts to affected and at-risk areas;
- Increase financing for surveillance, logistics, infection prevention and case management including capacity to isolate cases and to organize dignified burials;
- Accelerate the development of vaccines and therapeutics for all Ebola virus strains including Bundibugyo.

Africa CDC is fully mobilized to support the DRC, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and all at-risk Member States. Africans must know that Africa CDC stands with them — not only to respond to outbreaks and strengthen public health systems, but also to defend their dignity, sovereignty, and collective security under the framework of Africa Health Security and Sovereignty (AHSS). [Africa CDC – Africa Health Security and Sovereignty \(AHSS\)](#)

This position is consistent with Africa CDC’s previous actions. During the Marburg outbreak in Rwanda in 2024, Africa CDC publicly opposed travel measures that penalized transparency and effective outbreak control, supported Rwanda in their rapid action, and welcomed the lifting of the U.S. travel notice after Rwanda demonstrated strong containment. [Africa CDC Statement on Rwanda Marburg Response](#)

Africa CDC therefore calls on all countries, within Africa and globally, to refrain from imposing unnecessary travel or trade restrictions in response to this outbreak. The world must avoid repeating mistakes from previous health emergencies, where fear-driven measures caused major economic damage without delivering proportional public health benefits. Africa needs solidarity, not stigma. Africa needs investment, not isolation. Africa needs partnerships that strengthen both economies and health systems.

No one is safe until Africa is safe. And Africa is safer when the world invests in African health security, trusts African institutions, and works with Africa as a full partner.



The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention is the public health agency of the African Union. As an autonomous institution, Africa CDC supports African Union Member States to strengthen health systems, improve disease surveillance, and enhance emergency preparedness and response.

Media Contact
Wilson Johwa
Senior Communications Officer,
Africa CDC
Email: JohwaW@africacdc.org

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