

**H.E THE PRESIDENT SPEECH ON EBOLA
VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK**

Date: 26th November 2022

Fellow Countrymen, Country Women, and Foreign Residents in Uganda,

I would like to update you on the progress of our fight against the Ebola Sudan outbreak.

You will recall that on the 15th October 2022, I directed a number of movement restriction into and out of Kassanda and Mubende districts. These restrictions were aimed at limiting the spread of Ebola virus disease to densely populated areas in Kampala and Wakiso. The first 21 days elapsed on Friday 4th November 2021. On November 5th 2022, I directed an additional 21 days to extend the restrictions on movements into and out of Kassanda and Mubende districts which will end on November 26th 2022.

I am glad to note that these measures have worked, and we have been able to avert importation of the virus to Kampala. I thank all Ugandans, but more specifically the People of Mubende and Kassanda who have abided with the measures put in place by Government. I appreciate the pain and the inconvenience this has caused, but had we allowed the escalation of the outbreak into Kampala, the consequences would have been bad, including possible exportation to our African brothers in the neighboring countries.

Since the start of this outbreak in September 2022, the virus had attempted to move from Mubende, and Kassanda, to Kagadi, Bunyangabu, Kyegegwa, Wakiso, Kampala City, Masaka and Jinja.

I am glad to note that we have been able to stop further spread in the districts of Masaka, Kyegegwa, Bunyangabu and Kagadi. The Ministry of Health responded with swiftness to Jinja, and so far over 300 contacts have been listed and put under institutional quarantine. It is now 14 days since the last case in Jinja district, and we have not had any other cases coming from these areas, but those in quarantine must complete the 21 days for us to be sure, they are free of Ebola.

It may be too early to celebrate any successes, but overall, I have been briefed that the picture is good. As I indicated to you earlier, Ebola is a contact disease, unlike coronavirus which is airborne, hence much easier to control, despite its devastating nature.

STATUS OF THE EBOLA OUTBREAK

To-date, 141 people have been confirmed positive for Ebola virus disease, 79 have recovered while 55 have succumbed to the disease. A total of 06 confirmed cases are still admitted and receiving treatment at both the Mubende (5) and Entebbe (1) Ebola Treatment Units. Specifically, the current active admissions are from Kassanda, Mubende and Kampala districts.

Kampala has registered the highest recovery rate of 83% (15/18 cases) while Mubende and Kassanda have the lowest recovery rates at 45% (29/64 cases) and 42% (20/48) respectively. The good outcomes in Kampala were a result of Government's quick decision to quarantine contacts and getting them early to hospital when they develop symptoms. The opportunity for immediate quarantine of contacts was lost for Mubende and Kasanda, as the first probable case died on the 6th September and we got to know about Ebola in Mubende on

the 20th September, by this time the disease had spread to many other sub-counties as I have previously shown you.

The country has been responding to this outbreak for nearly two month and one week now (68 days), and we have registered successes. As I indicated earlier, we have three districts retired from the follow up list having completed more than 42 days since the last case of Ebola was reported coupled with no further spread. These are Kagadi, Bunyangabu, Kyegegwa. Six districts (Mubende, Kassanda, Kampala, Wakiso, Jinja and Masaka are still under follow up.

Additionally, we have districts with imported cases, plus or minus secondary transmission such as Wakiso, Masaka, Jinja and Kampala. These districts continue to register progress in control of the outbreak as observed by the number of days since the last confirmed case was registered. For example: Masaka has spent 24 days so far, with no secondary transmission, a success just like what we saw in Kagadi and Bunyangabo districts. Wakiso, Jinja and Kampala districts have spent (17), (11) and (09) days respectively since the last confirmed case. Although Kampala and Wakiso are largely silent, we remain very cautious and alert with heightened surveillance.

The epicenters of Mubende and Kassanda have also made good progress and a very commendable job in controlling the disease and the spread.

However, recently one case was identified in Mubende on November 13th, 2022, after the district had gone **15** days without reporting a case. This is a 23-year-old female medical student from the Eastern Division of Mubende municipality with a history of contact to an earlier case. It is now **13** days since this latest

case was reported in Mubende therefore more work still needs to be done for the district to be completely free of Ebola.

Similarly, Kassanda district has shown an improved progress in the response since my last speech. It is now almost two weeks (15) days since the district reported a confirmed case of Ebola. We are cognizant of the challenges of a weak health system, myths, misinformation, and belief in witchcraft coupled with a single incident of exhumation of a dead body that resulted into a flare up of cases.

I would like to assure the public that we have established a fully-fledged response to contain the disease spread. We are very optimistic that the outbreak will come to an end in the coming months.

Therefore, to further sustain the gains in control of Ebola that we have made, and to protect the rest of the country from continued exposure, all the directives issued on 15th October, 2022, followed by those communicated on November 5th 2022 by the Hon. Minister of Health, will be extended for another Twenty-One (21) days.

Why another 21 days? This is the incubation period for Ebola. The districts of Mubende and Kassanda have only gone 13 and 15 days respectively without a case and there are twenty-three (23) people in quarantine in Mubende while in Kassanda there are 102 contacts under follow up. This situation is still fragile. Without completing 21 days as we saw with Mubende, a case can pop up anywhere. It is therefore important that we complete the entire cycle which will bring us to 17th December. If there is no case, then we open fully. However, if

we open now and a case appears, we will have destroyed all the gains made in this war. I therefore appeal for calm and understanding

Our healthcare workers will continue to do all it takes to save lives and bring the epidemic to an end. I call upon the public to cooperate with the healthcare workers and report anybody with signs and symptoms like that of Ebola early enough to improve survival of the patients but also to protect the rest of the population. Again, I urge you: do not run away from one place to another when you're a contact. Instead, identify yourself to the nearest health facility to get early care, should you get ill. In addition, spreading the disease to the other parts of the country exposes many people to infection and makes the epidemic more difficult to control.

Lastly, I want to thank the people of Mubende and Kasanda districts for understanding the reason for these measures and their commitment and sacrifice. We are relying on you to cooperate and bring this epidemic to an end. I also appeal to the population in Kampala metropolitan area to cooperate and avoid spreading the disease further. ***Let us work together so that we can we have a safe festive season.***

Finally, I appreciate all the healthcare workers for their tireless efforts, dedication, and commitment to control the epidemic and ensure that the country is safe.

Thank you for listening to me.

For God and my Country

Gen (RTD) Yoweri K. Museveni

PRESIDENT