



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON PANIC OCCASIONED BY REPORTS OF ALLEGED
EBOLA VICTIMS IN KOBOKO**

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Minister of State for Health, Primary Health Care

July 17, 2019

Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament

Honourable Members of Parliament

At the 9th of the sitting of the 1st meeting of the 4rd session of the 10th Parliament of Uganda held on Tuesday 09th July, 2019, Hon. Bada Diri Margaret, (MP, Koboko) raised concern over panic occasioned by reports of Ebola victims within a few kilometers of the Northwestern border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament and Hon. Members of Parliament, Ministry of Health would like to set the record as follows;

First and foremost, there is no confirmed case of Ebola Virus Disease in Koboko District or any other part of the country.

The reports of panic in Hon. Baba Diri's district are due to the high level of awareness that has been created by the Ministry of health and its partners. However as leaders we should calm people down and reassure our constituents that all is being to ensure their safety.

The Ministry of Health has the capacity to respond to all outbreak alerts and provide information to the public accordingly. Reports of Ebola victims should always be confirmed with the Ministry of Health that has the machinery to analyze and report with evidence.

Rumours coming from the community should always be provided to the Ministry of Health for verification to avoid panic.

The above notwithstanding, when one death of a confirmed Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) case was recorded in Ariwala town in DRC which is close to West Nile region, 8km for the border with Arua District. Due to the proximity of this town, there is a high risk of importing the virus in the region. Communities from the affected areas share many social services, which includes markets, churches, schools, transportation facilities and the use of health facilities on the Ugandan side by Congolese.

However, to date, only 2 alerts have been investigated in that region and both tested negative for EVD.

The districts in West Nile region including Koboko District are high on alert and strengthening preparedness activities to prevent the importation of EVD into the region.

In the same vein, today is the 33rd day since the death of the last confirmed case of Ebola in Uganda on 13th June 2019. Uganda has since not registered any new confirmed Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) case in Kasese District or any other part of the country.

On 04th July 2019, all 114 people who directly or indirectly came into contact with the confirmed EVD patients completed the mandatory 21 days of follow-up without developing any signs and symptoms of the disease. Currently, there are no people under follow up which means that EVD transmission in Kasese district has been effectively interrupted by the country's disease response mechanisms.

The Ministry of Health and partners are also closely following up a case of a fishmonger who came to Mpondwe market on Thursday 11th July, 2019 to buy fish. She was a well-known fish monger and a regular trader at the Mpondwe market. By the time of her arrival on 11th July 2019, she presented with Ebola -like symptoms.

However, she travelled back to Beni on Friday 12th July, 2019 and was admitted in the Beni Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) on Saturday 13th July 2019. She died on Monday 15th July 2019 in the ETU after testing positive for EVD.

This case might have not used the formal border Points of Entry (PoE) as she was supposed to have been picked by health workers at the PoE if her temperature was high.

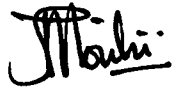
However, working with teams in DRC, we are closely following up contacts to this specific case both in Mpondwe, Uganda and DRC.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, The Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO) did provide a travel advisory that informed the population about the risks in the country and what needs to be done.

In conclusion, Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, I am confident that Ministry of Health and partners have contained the spread of the Ebola outbreak and there is no cause for alarm or fear but we advise all Ugandans to remain vigilant and alert. I urge all Ugandans to avoid handshaking, hugging, mass gatherings and to observe infection, prevention and control practices such as washing hands with soap and clean water at all times both at health facilities and communities.

I beg to submit.

Thank you,



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Minister of State for Health, Primary Health Care

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FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY