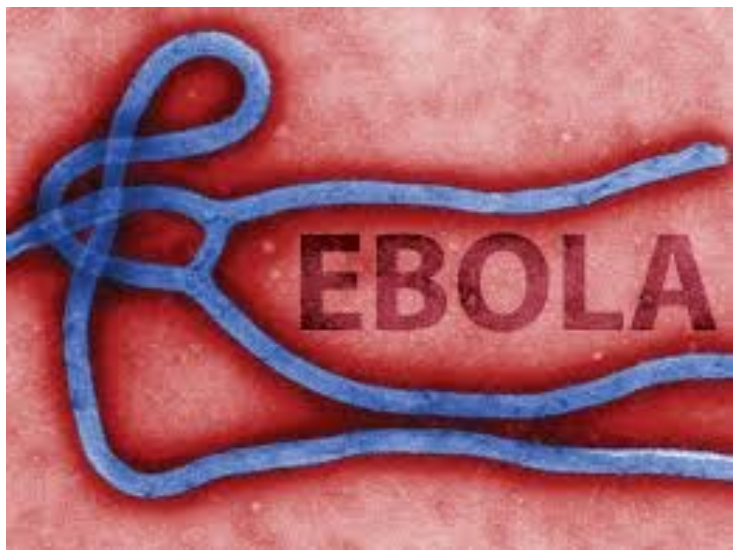


AHF urges UN to follow its own mandate to safeguard Ebola response

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AHF urges the United Nations to follow its existing mandate for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure Ebola-relief efforts can proceed without the threat of violence against healthcare workers, resources and civilians



As the second worst Ebola outbreak in history rages on in Central Sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) urges the United Nations Security Council to protect response efforts, healthcare workers and civilians by enforcing its existing UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) mandate to ensure the security of personnel and resources being used to fight the virus.

The current outbreak has seen approximately 650 confirmed and probable cases with almost 400 deaths since Aug. 1, 2018. Widespread violence from armed militias continues to wreak havoc on the affected region, stifling contact tracing and vaccination efforts and putting healthcare workers at enormous risk. In addition to Ebola spreading to the rest of the country, the WHO states that there is a “very high” risk of the virus spreading to bordering nations Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan.

Most recently, the government used the virus as a reason to prevent over 1 million people living in the affected areas from voting in the Dec. 30 elections. This caused violent protests and attacks on Ebola treatment facilities that forced aid groups to suspend operations for days and required patients awaiting test results to be moved to alternate locations. Additionally, international workers in Uganda reported increased numbers of refugees fleeing the DRC after the elections, prompting further concerns of the virus spreading into other countries.

The time has come for more to be done to end the current Ebola outbreak. AHF urges the United Nations Security Council to enforce its already-in-place resolution 2049 (2018) and the MONUSCO mandate. With 17,656 authorized troops and police, more can and should be done to ensure peace throughout Ebola-affected areas by following the mandate’s assigned tasks of “preventing, deterring and stopping all armed groups and local militias from inflicting violence on civilians as well as supporting and undertaking local mediation efforts to prevent escalation of violence.”

“Even though we have seen an improvement in response to this outbreak compared to five years ago when over 11,000

people lost their lives to Ebola, more must be done to protect ongoing efforts in the Congo,” said AHF Africa Regional Policy and Advocacy Manager Alice Kayongo. “Workers are already putting their lives on the line to fight the virus—they should not have to worry about external threats of violence. We implore the UN to do all in its power to stop the violence in the region before this outbreak become even worse.”

Rampant security issues, the high risk for Ebola crossing borders and instability after recent elections underscore the need for immediate action in the DRC. AHF urges that the United Nations utilize its mandate to protect healthcare personnel, resources and civilians—the world cannot afford a repeat of the disaster that hit West Africa in 2014.