

Statement by the President of the Security Council

The Security Council reiterates its grave concern about the most recent outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It takes note that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the Ebola outbreak in the DRC a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The Security Council highlights the urgency of the Ebola response, because the disease could spread rapidly, including to neighbouring countries, possibly having serious humanitarian consequences and impacting regional stability.

The Security Council reiterates its appreciation for the efforts of the government of the DRC, WHO and other UN agencies, the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the African Union, humanitarian organisations, international donors and all supporting the response to contain the disease and treat Ebola patients, noting the challenging operating environment.

The Security Council emphasizes the need for continued cooperation and coordination with the DRC to address the Ebola outbreak, as well as with the States in the region, as appropriate.

The Security Council stresses the need for government and civil society in affected and at-risk countries to work urgently with relevant partners to improve their preparedness for preventing, detecting and responding to possible cases, as well as to implement optimal vaccine strategies that have maximum impact on curtailing the outbreak. The Security Council notes with appreciation the contribution of the relevant non-governmental organizations to the response to the outbreak and their involvement in the coordination of the response, in support of national authorities.

The Security Council welcomes the efforts of David Gressly as the UN Ebola Emergency Response Coordinator to create the enabling environment for the WHO led public health response in support of the government of the DRC, and the commitment of the UN Secretary General to addressing and containing the Ebola outbreak, including by providing sufficient resources to the Coordinator.

The Security Council reiterates its serious concern regarding the security situation in the areas affected by the Ebola outbreak, in particular the attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, which is severely hampering the response efforts and facilitating the spread of the virus in the DRC and the wider region; and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all armed groups.

The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms all attacks against and threats intentionally directed against medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, including the killings of health workers, as well as attacks on their means of transport and equipment, hospitals and other medical facilities, bearing in mind the need to ensure that those responsible are held accountable and brought to justice by relevant authorities. They recalled the provisions of resolution 2286 (2016) in that regard.

The Security Council demands that safe and unhindered access be ensured for humanitarian and medical personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, to patients and others in need; and also stresses that response teams and medical facilities must be respected and protected, and that they must not be a target, in accordance with international law.

The Security Council highlights the need for a comprehensive and community based approach, by building trust among the population, especially those most at risk, to facilitate an effective response. The Security Council also encourages the promotion of a comprehensive and sustained response beyond the current outbreak, support health facilities and basic needs and services for the affected populations in DRC and the region, in order to prevent or minimize any potential future outbreak.

The Security Council emphasizes the importance of strengthening international support and engagement, including full and timely financial contributions to the response, technical assistance, scientific cooperation and human resources to bring the disease permanently and successfully under control.