

WaterStep Launches Cross-Border Ebola Response

WaterStep is establishing emergency bleach production hubs near affected communities, allowing frontline workers to produce critical disinfectant on site.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- WaterStep has launched emergency operations across the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, and Kenya as health officials warn that a rapidly escalating Ebola outbreak is outpacing medical response efforts in parts of Central Africa.

As of June 2, 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that there are 321 confirmed cases in the DRC and 116 suspected cases, with 48 confirmed deaths and more than 240 suspected deaths. Uganda has confirmed nine cases, one death, and one suspected case.

The outbreak is being driven by the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus, a rare variant for which there are currently no approved vaccines or licensed therapeutics. WHO has assessed the risk as very high within the DRC and high at the regional level, citing ongoing transmission in areas already affected by conflict, displacement, and weak health infrastructure.

As the outbreak accelerates, WaterStep is establishing emergency bleach production hubs near affected communities and healthcare facilities, allowing frontline workers to produce critical disinfectant on site rather than relying on fragile supply chains.

WHO recommends that all affected health facilities and surrounding communities implement rigorous surface and equipment disinfection using chlorine-based solutions, ensure functional handwashing stations are available at all key entry and transit points, and conduct sustained community sensitization to address stigma, promote early care-seeking, and reinforce safe practices.



DRC Ebola Outbreak Response

WaterStep's package of services is directly aligned with WHO guidance for the Ebola outbreak response.

In Goma, DRC, WaterStep teams have already distributed bleach and handwashing stations to schools, clinics, and in public gathering spaces. Additional teams have arrived in Bunia, near the center of the outbreak, where WaterStep has secured facilities to mass produce chlorine bleach for hospitals, schools, markets, and churches. The organization is also expanding infection prevention efforts into Uganda and Kenya, where teams are supporting communities and transportation hubs along key cross-border travel routes.



DRC Ebola Outbreak Response

“Outbreaks like this are why WaterStep exists,” said Mark Hogg, founder and CEO of WaterStep. “Ebola doesn’t spread because doctors don’t know how to stop it. It spreads because healthcare workers and communities often lack the basic tools they need to stop transmission. One of the most important of those tools is disinfectant. When a clinic runs out of bleach, healthcare workers are forced to ration one of their primary defenses against infection. Our technology allows hospitals and clinics to produce disinfectant that exceeds WHO standards on site using water, salt, and electricity. They can begin producing it within hours and continue producing it for as long as the outbreak lasts.”

WaterStep's ability to respond to Ebola outbreaks is rooted in lessons learned during previous epidemics. The organization's patented BleachMaker technology was developed following the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa, when healthcare facilities across the region struggled to obtain sufficient quantities of disinfectant. Designed specifically for outbreak environments, the portable system uses water, salt, and electricity to produce chlorine bleach on site in less than 90 minutes.

The technology proved especially valuable during the Democratic Republic of Congo's 2018–2020 Ebola outbreak, the second largest ever recorded. In many affected areas, damaged roads, insecurity, and remote geography made transportation of liquid bleach impossible. WaterStep's technology enabled hospitals and clinics to produce disinfectant where it was needed most, reducing dependence on fragile supply chains and helping protect healthcare workers on the front lines.

“In 2019 alone, more than 100 doctors used WaterStep's BleachMaker to significantly help

reduce further infection of the Ebola virus in the DRC,” Dr. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, former Director General of the National Institute for Biomedical Research and former Minister of Health of the Democratic Republic of Congo, said in 2020.

Today, as a new Ebola outbreak spreads through Central Africa, WaterStep is once again deploying the same technology and expertise to help communities, healthcare workers, and treatment facilities strengthen infection prevention efforts at the local level.

Since 2014, WaterStep has responded to more than a dozen deadly outbreaks of Ebola, cholera, typhoid, and COVID-19 across multiple continents.

“The world often focuses on vaccines and treatments, and rightly so,” Hogg said. “But outbreaks are won or lost in clinics, schools, markets, and communities. The ability to stop transmission at the local level remains one of the most powerful tools we have.”

To help stop the spread, visit <https://waterstep.org/get-involved/donate>.

About WaterStep

WaterStep is an international non-profit organization based in Louisville, Ky., USA, dedicated to improving public health through safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and infection prevention solutions. Since 1995, WaterStep has worked in more than 72 countries, equipping communities, healthcare facilities, and humanitarian responders with sustainable technologies and training to combat waterborne disease and public health emergencies. The organization has impacted more than 18 million lives. More at waterstep.org.

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