

ICN calls for urgent action in DRC to prioritize protection of nurses responding to Ebola outbreak

ICN has written to DRC Health Minister demanding immediate action to pay and protect nurses and health workers responding Ebola outbreak.

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"You cannot fight Ebola if you don't pay the people fighting it": [ICN](#) calls for urgent action in DRC

Nurses are risking their lives to protect their communities, often at great personal risk, yet months into this crisis many are still waiting to be paid."

ICN CEO Howard Catton

Geneva, 15 August 2026 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has written to DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba demanding immediate action to pay and protect nurses and health workers responding to the escalating Ebola outbreak. ICN has been in contact with nurses and the DRC Ordre National des Infirmiers since the earliest days of the outbreak.

Nurses and health workers on the frontline report having gone unpaid for two to three months now, while facing extreme pressures and serious risks to their lives. Delays in administrative and verification processes cannot justify withholding pay from the workforce the country depends upon to bring the outbreak under control.

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

"You cannot fight Ebola if you don't pay the people fighting it. Nurses are risking their lives to protect their communities, often at great personal risk, yet months into this crisis many are still waiting to be paid. This needs urgent political leadership and direct intervention. Our calls are clear: Pay health workers what they are owed, guarantee they will be paid regularly from now on, and give them the protection they need to do their jobs.

This is about protecting nurses' basic rights, but it also about stopping Ebola.

Nurses are absolutely vital to the response at every level. As the largest group of health professionals and consistently voted the public's most trusted health profession, they bring care,

leadership and trusted health information to communities. Nurses' trusted role is especially important to combat the health misinformation and distrust circulating in this crisis, which is undermining public health measures and exposing health workers to unacceptable hostility and violence.

If you don't protect and pay your health workers, you will lose them, and without them, there is no effective response."

ICN's letter calls on the DRC Government to immediately pay all outstanding wages and risk allowances and guarantee regular payments going forward, alongside adequate PPE, insurance, compensation and other essential protections.

ICN warns that the mistakes of COVID-19, when at least 115,000 health workers worldwide lost their lives and many nurses faced a lack of PPE along with underpaid wages or low salaries. Protecting, paying and retaining nurses must be treated as an urgent part of the public health response.

Note to editors

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 140 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally. www.icn.ch

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