

ACHPR/Res. 424 (EXT.OS/ XXVI) 2019: Resolution on the Threat of the Ebola Epidemic Virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), meeting at its 26th Extraordinary Session held from 16 to 30 July, 2019 in Banjul, The Gambia:

Recalling its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights pursuant to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

Recalling Article 16 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guaranteeing the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health;

Further recalling the Declaration by the Working Group of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa of 16 December, 2014 on the collective responsibility of States in preventing and controlling the Ebola pandemic;

Recalling the decision taken by the WHO on 17 July, 2019 to declare the on-going epidemic in the DRC as a public health emergency of international concern;

Bearing in mind the Joint Press Release issued on 19 July, 2019 by the African Union through its African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Africa) and the World Health Organisation on the situation of the Ebola Virus Epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

Noting the Communiqué of the 862nd meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 23 July, 2019 on the Ebola epidemic in the East of the DRC ;

Concerned by the resurgence of the tenth haemorrhagic fever epidemic declared in August 2018 which has already caused the death of more than 1 737 people, mainly in the Beni and Butembo areas in the North-Kivu province, in the eastern part of the country;

Deeply concerned by the killing of health personnel engaged in the fight against the spread of the Ebola virus, and by the attacks on treatment centres, coupled with the conflict situation prevailing in these regions, thereby preventing unrestricted and continuous access by medical teams and humanitarian agencies and the impact of the response to the epidemic;

Concerned by the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in the Goma region, which registered its first fatality on 16 July, 2019;

Concerned by the fact that the inability of the country to definitively stem the Ebola virus epidemic poses a real danger for the spread of the epidemic to other African regions and countries;

Conscious that the worsening of this epidemic has implications on the lives and health of the population and on free movement of persons and goods;

Noting the decision of the President of the Republic to assume control of the management of the Ebola-related epidemic crisis and to introduce a new vaccine into the country;

The Commission:

- i. **Strongly condemns** the attacks perpetrated against the health centres and the personnel in charge of the response to the Ebola epidemic;
- ii. **Urges** the parties involved in the conflicts to allow and facilitate unimpeded access to the medical teams and humanitarian agencies and organizations in the regions affected by the epidemic to enable them provide the necessary care and assistance to sick people;
- iii. **Pays glowing tribute** to the healthcare personnel, some of whom have lost their lives while providing services to the infected people;
- iv. **Commends** the efforts of CDC Africa, WHO and other partners in combating the Ebola;
- v. **Urges** the Congolese authorities to take the necessary measures to protect the health of the populations and avoid any decision likely to impede an effective response to the Ebola virus;
- vi. **Makes an urgent appeal** to State Parties to the African Charter to strengthen their national health systems to prevent and contain the Ebola epidemic disease as well as other epidemics;
- vii. **Recalls** that combating the epidemic is the collective responsibility of all and requires coordinated and sustained action of all partners concerned at the national, regional and international levels in order to successfully contain and eradicate the epidemic;
- viii. **Reaffirms** the importance of the recommendations made by CDC Africa and the WHO Regional Office for Africa and reiterates their call on the Member States to implement them;
- ix. **Urges** the international community to support on-going efforts to eliminate the Ebola epidemic in the country; and
- x. **Welcomes** the decision of the Peace and Security Council to establish an African Union Mission Against Ebola in the DRC (AUME).

Done in Banjul, 30 July, 2019