

Statement

By

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President of the Republic of Uganda

On

Ebola outbreak

to the nation

Rwakitura

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29th July, 2012

Good evening country men,

I am addressing you about some new problem in the Health sector. This is the emergency of Ebola again in our country. About three weeks ago in the village of Nyanswiga in Kibaale district, some people become very sick. Initially the health workers did not realize what it was. This was apparently because the people who were sick had many other problems....malaria etc. And apparently the bleeding which normally accompanies Ebola did not take place initially among these patients. That is why Ebola is part of what they call hemorrhagic fevers – this is because of the bleeding which takes place.

The doctors in Kibaale say the symptoms were a bit atypical of Ebola. They were not clearly like Ebola

symptoms. Because of that delay, the sickness spread to another village called Kibaari and to another village called Kisindiizi. Some people went to Kagadi hospital and at least one or two went to Mulago Hospital.

The starting point was Nyanswiga. When people died those who came to bury them also got sick. They are the ones who transferred the sickness from Nyanswiga, Kibaari, Kisindiizi, Kagadi hospital and eventually Mulago Hospital.

Ebola spreads by contact. When you contact each other physically then Ebola spreads through sweat, through saliva in case you kiss, blood (exchange of blood) vomiting in case you touch the vomit of somebody who is sick or diarrhea, urine, sexual fluids etc all those transmit Ebola. Fortunately it seems

Ebola does not spread through air (through breathing) it spreads through contact. The Ministry of Health people are tracing all the people that have had contact with the victims. They have for instance put under quarantine all the seven doctors that dealt with one of the people who came to Mulago and died there as well as the thirteen health workers who were accompanying them. They are following up all the cases. Up to now fourteen people have died from this Ebola. This is to alert you about this new problem. The Ministry of Health has already announced the fact that samples taken from sick people and those who died were confirmed at Entebbe as Ebola. I appeal to you to first of all report all cases which appear to be like Ebola. These are high fever, vomiting, sometimes

diarrhea and with bleeding. All such cases should be reported immediately to the health authorities. In case somebody dies from what you suspect to be Ebola please do not take on the job of burying him or her, call the medical workers to be the ones to do it because they are the ones that can do it safely. In the meantime, avoid shaking hands. We discourage the shaking of hands because that can cause a contact through sweat which can cause problems. And when people are sick in hospitals with symptoms which look like Ebola, they should be handled by medical workers wearing protective gear. When we handle this case well we can eliminate Ebola quickly. This is what happened in Luwero about six months ago. A girl contracted Ebola and she died at Bombo Military Hospital.

However because the medical staff from the beginning had been suspicious and had handled her carefully, there was no spread from that sickness. I want to salute the doctors of Luwero for having detected that sickness in time. I therefore appeal to you to be vigilante, avoid shaking of hands; do not take on burying somebody who has died from symptoms which look like Ebola instead call the health workers to be the ones to do it and avoid promiscuity because these sicknesses can also go through sex. I thank you very much and I wish you good luck. May God rest the souls of those who died in eternal peace.

I thank you very much.