



## NEWS RELEASE

# MERCY CORPS: INCREASING VIOLENCE IN DRC THREATENS EFFORTS AGAINST EBOLA

## Upcoming elections, increasing community distrust may exacerbate fragile situation as Ebola spreads

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### ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible
- Empowering people to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good
- Meeting the urgent needs of today through emergency response and disaster preparedness
- Building a stronger tomorrow by connecting people to the resources they need to strengthen their community from within
- About 5,000 team members reaching nearly 22 million people
- \$436.6 million total operating revenue in FY2017; 87% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

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GOMA, Democratic Republic of Congo – The global organization [Mercy Corps](#) warns that increasing insecurity in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo poses a serious threat to current efforts against Ebola there. The province is the epicenter of the current Ebola outbreak and as of October 2, there were 162 cases of Ebola in DRC. Complicating matters, [some 120 armed groups](#) are fighting in the region.

"It's becoming harder to help prevent Ebola because of increasing insecurity," says Whitney Elmer, DRC Deputy Country Director for Mercy Corps. "We are also worried that the elections later this year may lead to more violence and make an already unstable situation worse."

Last week, Mercy Corps temporarily paused its Ebola response following violent attacks in and around Beni. While operations have resumed, the organization continues to make day-to-day decisions regarding where and when it is safe to operate. More than 1.5 million people live in affected health zones in DRC.

"We're seeing increasing community distrust around Ebola efforts in the areas where we're working," Elmer adds. "If health and aid workers can't safely access at-risk communities, we can't prevent the spread of the virus."

Mercy Corps emergency teams are distributing hygiene kits and hand-washing stations for health facilities in Musienene, Lubero, Beni and Butembo in North Kivu. The organization is also repairing water points and latrines as well as conducting health and hygiene education in health facilities, schools and other public spaces.

The organization is preparing to significantly scale up its Ebola response in the coming weeks, doubling the number of emergency response teams and expanding beyond North Kivu to Ituri province. The [World Health Organization](#) recently warned that the risk of the virus spreading at the national and regional level is very high.

Mercy Corps has worked in DRC since 2007, reaching a total of 1.5 million Congolese through emergency support, economic opportunities through agriculture, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity and conflict.

Join us and support [Mercy Corps' work in DRC](#) and elsewhere in the world.