

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 25, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW Washington, DC 20520-0099

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write with alarm at the uncontrolled Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda. Just a month after the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared an Ebola outbreak, there are already more than 1,000 suspected and confirmed cases of the virus and hundreds of suspected deaths. In contrast, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, there were just 40 suspected cases when the worldwide response began. The World Health Organization (WHO) remains the body best positioned to surveil the outbreak and stand up an effective international response. We urge you to support a blanket waiver that would enable the State Department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other relevant agencies to work with the WHO for the purposes of responding to the Ebola outbreak.

A fast and effective response is especially critical because the epicenter of the outbreak is in a highly volatile region where humanitarian operations and access to essential services have long been constrained by conflicts involving multiple armed groups. If the outbreak spreads to further regions of turmoil, the consequences could be disastrous. Any humanitarian operation in this unstable context requires intense interagency and intergovernmental coordination. International cooperation is mission critical for an outbreak of this severity.

In January 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14155 initiating the withdrawal of the U.S. from the WHO. This Executive Order, which was finalized in January 2026, ended virtually all American support for the WHO and recalled all U.S. personnel and contracts working for the organization. Without WHO coordination, the U.S. lacks key tools needed to help keep Americans safe from the outbreak. For example, the State Department and CDC are unable to access U.S.-funded personal protective equipment stored in WHO facilities that could have already been deployed to the affected areas. Additionally, U.S. agencies are not privy to critical information on the same timeline as WHO member countries, which was demonstrated by the U.S. not learning of this outbreak until nine days after the WHO.

An outbreak of this nature requires constant and predictable coordination with all agencies involved in the global response. A waiver would allow all relevant departments to immediately begin providing resources to and working with the WHO to coordinate our response and share all the relevant Ebola-related resources and information.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to an expedited response.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



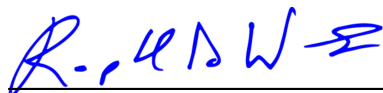
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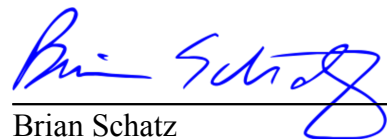
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