

## **Ebola outbreak in the Diocese of Butembo-Beni in DR Congo: Two Communiqué released by Mgr Melchizedek SIKULU Paluku raising awareness on Ebola disease**

**Kinshasa, August 30, 2018 - (caritasdev.cd) -:** The Bishop of the Diocese of Butembo-Beni, East of the DR. Congo where Ebola epidemic has broken out for a month now, has spoken again on RFI about the danger posed by this Ebola virus disease. Bishop Melchizedek SIKULU Paluku has indeed recalled on this French media his two communiqué. One is addressed to all the faithful of the said diocese and men of good will while the second concerns the practical arrangements for Ebola virus disease during Eucharistic celebrations, reports caritasdev.cd.

In the first communiqué, which is dated August 7, 2018, the Bishop of Butembo-Beni calls all priests, religious, pastoral agents to responsibility, an awakening of solidarity and collaboration. "Respect and, apply the rules of basic hygiene, as recommended by the Ministry of Health through a simple but protective gesture that is the washing of hands at any time," said Msgr Melchisedech SIKULU Paluku. And the Prelate adds: "More than that, let us take advantage of this ordeal that strikes us right now to strengthen our Christian faith and we must support each other in our parish communities, our priestly and religious communities, our Living Ecclesial Communities and our families. to shut out this epidemic

In his second communiqué, dated as of the day Melchizedek SIKULU Paluku said that "the circumstances that we have been going through since the Ebola virus disease was officially declared push us to suspend momentarily the rite of peace that is planned in the celebration. Eucharistic where the Sunday assembly in the absence of the priest ". The Prelate gives details on this subject. "In the exchange of peace, we give each other peace, when the deacon or a concelebrant invites us there with these words: 'brothers, give you the peace of Christ'. The Ordinary of Butembo-Beni recommended that one place at the entrance of each church, a washing point of the hands.

Caritas Congo, Asbl has dispatched since the beginning of this epidemic, one of its expert, Emmanuel BOFOE to support Caritas Butembo-Beni in coordinating activities with the dioceses concerned by this epidemic. These dioceses are: Butembo-Beni, Goma, Wamba, Bunia and Kisangani.

According to Emmanuel BOFOE, the Bishop of Butembo-Beni during his visit of August 27, 2018 to Mangina insisted that people should not hide the sick at home at home. "As soon as you find a suspicious case at home, you must declare it to the community relays, to the village nurse to be taken care of," said the Bishop. He called on Christians to get involved in the active search for cases so that we can denounce them, so that they are referred to the care centers. The Prelate finally called the entire population of his diocese to "prudence and wisdom, not to leave room for rumors." After his visit to the Ebola Treatment Center, Msgr. Melchisédech SIKULU Paluku was vaccinated to encourage people at risk to report to the health authorities.

### **The Catholic Church of the diocese of Butembo-Beni at the bedside of patients suffering from the Ebola virus**

During his mission to Mangina, Monsignor Melchisedech SIKULU Paluku also emphasized the role that the Church plays in its social pastoral, through the actions of Caritas. This love-Caritas is manifested among the sick, the afflicted, the prisoners, the homeless, without distinction of races, tribes and religion, he said, according to an evangelical requirement.

in Matthew 25: 31-46 ("I was sick, you visited me"). On this occasion, Msgr. Melchisedech SIKULI Paluku asked all priests, religious men, people of good will to "get involved as a common front to eradicate Ebola in our midst". "We must all stand up and watch for not allowing Ebola to enter our family," the Prelate said.

### **The work of humanitarian organizations hailed by Msgr. Melchisedech SIKULI Paluku**

Before leaving the city of Mangina, the Bishop of Butembo-Beni hailed the work done by all the humanitarian organizations involved in this response to the Ebola virus disease, which are being deployed in Mangina. The Prelate has particularly encouraged Caritas staff to intensify their various sensitizations to the populations throughout all the parishes, to continue the activities of the distribution of food to the sick and the people who are placed in isolation and observation in the various centers. treatment. The Ordinary of Butembo-Beni did not fail to salute the work done by the Oblate Sisters of the Assumption in the preparation of the food to be given to the sick.

### **Epidemiological situation in the province of North Kivu**

According to the General Directorate for the Control of Ebola Virus Disease, the epidemiological situation in the province of North Kivu on Wednesday, August 29, 2018 is summed up by a total of 115 cases of haemorrhagic fever reported in the region, of which 85 confirmed and 30 likely. 10 suspected cases are under investigation. Suspicious cases of Goma proved negative. 1 new case has been confirmed in Mabalako. 2 community deaths (probable cases) occurred in Beni. 1 new person was healed.

It should also be noted that on Wednesday 29 June 2018, the Minister of Health, Dr Oly ILUNGA Kalenga, spoke at the North Kivu Provincial Assembly on the evolution of the response to the Ebola epidemic and he responded to the concerns of members of the Provincial Government, MPPs and Civil Society. The Minister advised to keep the start of the school year on schedule, while strengthening and systematizing the hygiene measures in each school. For health professionals, he explained the procedure for registering providers on the lists of personnel involved in the response. It should also be noted that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has handed over a batch of ten tons of medical and surgical equipment to the Beni Reference General Hospital, in order to avoid cases of infection. Ebola in maternity homes. This donation will cover the care of at least 30,000 people for 6 months and includes childbirth care, access to family planning and care for victims of gender-based violence. As for vaccination since its beginning on August 8, 2018, a total of 4,645 people have been vaccinated, including 2,372 in Mabalako, 1,135 in Beni, 1,017 in Mandima and 121 in Oicha. Due to the current Ebola outbreak in North Kivu province, several high-risk areas have been temporarily excluded from the recent polio vaccination campaign launched in Goma. These areas include Beni, Butembo, Mabalako, Musienene, Katwa, Kalunguta and Oicha. Once the Ebola outbreak is under control, polio vaccination in these areas can begin.

**JOSEPH KIALA**



Visit of the Bishop of Butembo-Beni to the Ebola Treatment Center and to your right Emmanuel BOFOE (far left) of Caritas Congo Asbl



Monsignor Melchizedech SIKULI Paluku los of his descent on ground in Mandina where he was vaccinated to encourage people at risk to report to the health authorities



Monsignor Bishop of Butembo-Beni and Emmanuel BOFOE of Caritas Congo Asbl conducting a field visit



Emmanuel BOFOE of Caritas Congo Asbl interviewed by the press came to get the news



Mr. Emmanuel BOFOE of Caritas Congo Asbl in front of a distribution assistance