
The IFRC thanks the Director-General and the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee, for these insightful reports.

We are at a critical juncture in the 10th Ebola outbreak in the DRC – not least for us at the IFRC: without adequate funding our work and that of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Red Cross, will have to be dramatically scaled down. Increased community non-acceptance and the challenges posed with contact tracing mean there are more unknown chains of transmission. The implication is more cases go undetected for longer, people die without seeking life-saving care, and they transmit the virus to their loved ones while ill, and after death. If we cannot reverse this trend, it will be impossible to control this epidemic.

In response, our safe and dignified burials teams, made-up of Red Cross volunteers from the very communities affected by this outbreak, are working to ensure that the chain of transmission stops with the deceased. They have successfully provided over 2,500 culturally appropriate burials, which importantly, are constantly being adapted to the needs of the family, friends and community of the deceased.

Through our Red Cross Community Feedback System, affected communities have consistently expressed their need for better engagement and ownership of the response. Lack of trust fuels violence, which decreases treatment and access to communities to conduct safe burials. This in turn increases cases, which brings in more responders without community ownership, and the cycle begins anew.

On a weekly basis, communities are engaged in dialogue with our volunteers – they tell us their fears, worries, anxieties as well as the positive aspects of the response. Crucially, they also tell us about the wider social, economic and health challenges they are facing on a daily basis. This
information is invaluable – with partners, we are able to analyse this feedback and use it to inform our operational decision making.

The lessons from this community feedback are clear - we need to listen and respond to community concerns, to take a community centred approach that is locally led, but provided with vital international support, in order to address the crisis. Our approach is one that is ‘as local as possible, international as necessary’. We look forward to acting on this commitment with all partners involved as we move into the next stage of this response.

Thank you