

The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) applauded the United States government for its decision to lift the Level 3 Travel Health Notice for Marburg in Rwanda, which was initially issued on October 7, 2024. This advisory, which functioned similarly to a travel ban, effectively restricted the movement of American citizens to Rwanda and had a significant negative impact on the country's economy as it worked to address a complex and high-risk outbreak.

This decision highlights Rwanda's exceptional leadership and innovative management in controlling the Marburg outbreak. It reinforces the nation's strong commitment to protecting public health and restoring confidence both in Africa and globally.

In an act of transparency, Rwanda declared the Marburg outbreak on September 27, 2024, later identified as a zoonotic disease from bats. Recognizing the grave threat posed by the Marburg virus, with a potential fatality rate exceeding 80% if unchecked, the Africa CDC mobilized immediately. Within 24 hours of the declaration, over 30 public health experts, alongside critical resources, were deployed to support Rwanda's response efforts.

Africa CDC's contributions were instrumental in Rwanda's success, including decentralizing an effective and efficient laboratory network, enhancing surveillance systems, strengthening community engagement strategies, and bolstering the country's capacity to deliver a robust and coordinated response.

The Director General of Africa CDC set a powerful example of leadership by prioritizing Africa's urgent health crises (Mpox, Marburg and others) over international engagements. Cancelling participation in high-profile events such as the World Health Summit, G20, COP29, and others, the Director General instead focused on direct support on Mpox and Marburg, visiting Rwanda multiple times to work closely with President Paul Kagame, Minister of Health Dr Sabin Nsanzimana, and key stakeholders.

"Africa CDC's unwavering commitment was instrumental in ensuring that the Marburg outbreak remained contained within Rwanda's borders, preventing further regional or international spread." said Minister of Health Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana.

Recognizing Rwanda's extraordinary progress, the Director General officially appealed to the U.S. government through a letter addressed to the U.S. Secretary of Health and the CDC Director, submitted via the U.S. Ambassador to the African

Union on November 18, 2024. The letter highlighted Rwanda's exemplary outbreak management and called for a reassessment and lift of the L3 travel advisory.