

Raul Castro Says World Must Stop Ebola in West Africa or Face Pandemic



Havana, October 20 (RHC) -- The world must confront Ebola in West Africa to prevent what could become one of the worst pandemics in human history, Cuban President Raul Castro told Heads of State and senior representatives of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) on Monday.

The high level officials convened today in Havana for a special summit, to coordinate actions to fight the Ebola outbreak in Africa and prevent its further spread.

"I am convinced that if this threat is not stopped in West Africa with an immediate international response... it could become one of the gravest pandemics in human history," said the Cuban president, who also expressed appreciation for the quick reponse given by regional governments to the call made by the ALBA leadership to address the Ebola issue.

The foreign leaders for their part, praised Cuba's contribution to the fight against Ebola in West Africa. The Caribbean island of 11 million people has committed the largest medical contingent yet, of any single country, to the front lines of the epidemic in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, where the hemorrhagic fever has killed more than 4,500 people since March in the worst outbreak on record.

No Ebola cases have yet been reported in Latin America or the Caribbean; but the virus, which is spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, has reached the United States and Spain.

“This noble and urgent endeavor,” Raul Castro said, referring to the ongoing fight against Ebola, “demands the indispensable commitment and dedication of every nation in the world, to the extent of everyone’s possibilities.”

“In order to avoid being affected by the virus, we should prepare ourselves intensively, work together throughout the Americas on preventive measures, and be ready to deal with the disease and prevent its dissemination,” he concluded.

Other speakers at the Monday summit included Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Bolivia's Evo Morales and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, who said countries in the region, with the proper preparedness and coordinated action, could fight and defeat the outbreak of Ebola.

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