

GOARN

Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network

GOARN Newsletter

GOVERNANCE

GOARN Steering Committee 2026-2030 Announced

The GOARN Secretariat is pleased to announce the appointment of the new GOARN Steering Committee (SCOM) for the 2026-2030 term. Following a strong response from partner institutions across the network, the selection process was completed in accordance with established GOARN procedures, ensuring balanced geographic, organizational, technical and gender representation. The newly appointed Steering Committee will formally assume its responsibilities at SCOM Meeting #40, scheduled for 1-2 December 2026. We extend sincere appreciation to the outgoing Steering Committee members for their commitment, leadership and valuable contributions to strengthening GOARN's strategic direction and governance over the past term. The incoming SCOM brings together representatives from 21 partner institutions across all WHO regions, reflecting the diversity and expertise of the GOARN network. Members will guide the network's strategic priorities, foster collaboration among partners and support GOARN's mission to strengthen global outbreak alert and response capacity.

GOARN Steering Committee Members (2026-2030)

List in alphabetical order, by institution name

- Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- Dr. Wessam Mankoula
- Amref Health Africa, Kenya - Dr. Jackline Kiarie
- Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Dr. Guoqing Shi
- Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) - Dr. Haitham Bashier
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) - Dr. Thomas Hofmann
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) - Ms. Laura Archer
- Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), Italy - Dr. Flavia Riccardo
- Japan Institute for Health Security - Dr. Norio Ohmagari
- Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal - Dr. Prakash Budhathoky
- Ministry of Health of Brazil - Dr. Edenilo Baltazar Barreira Filho
- Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Thailand - Dr. Phanthanee Thitichai
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) - Dr. Daniela Garone
- National Institute of Health (NIH), Pakistan - Dr. Mumtaz Khan
- Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Germany - Dr. Andreas Jansen
- Pacific Community (SPC), Fiji - Ms. Margaret Leong
- UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST) - Dr. Edmund Newman
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - Dr. Douglas Noble
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), USA - Dr. Ali S. Khan
- University of Newcastle, Australia - Dr. Tambri Housen
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) - Dr. Athalia Christie
- World Health Organization (WHO) - Dr. Abdi Mahamud

The GOARN Operational Support Team looks forward to working closely with the new Steering Committee and the wider network to advance GOARN's mandate and strengthen collaboration across partner institutions in support of public health emergency preparedness and response worldwide.

GOARN is currently supporting nine emergency health operations globally through expert deployments. In September 2026, GOARN issued two (3) additional Request for Assistance for Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and region, 2023. Below is a summary of the RFA and the specialized expertise requested.

Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2026

RFA issued on 21 September seeks support for the following function based in Nairobi, Kenya:

- Risk Communication & Community Engagement (1 expert)

RFA issued on 03 September seeks support for the following functions based in Central African Republic:

- Epidemiology Surveillance expert (1 expert)
- Case Management expert (1 expert)
- Risk Communication and Community Engagement expert (1 expert)

Conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and region, 2023

RFA issued on 23 September seeks support for the following function based in Amman, Jordan:

- Public Health Data Analyst / Biostatistician

These efforts aim to ensure timely coordination with ongoing activities and support the mobilization of additional assistance where required.

Stories from the field

As part of its “Stories from the Field” series, GOARN highlights the voices and lived experiences of experts deployed through partner institutions to support WHO operations during public health emergencies.

Dr Ali S. Khan, from the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and a GOARN Steering Committee member, deployed through GOARN to Gaza, occupied Palestinian territory, in August and September 2026 in support of the ongoing health response.

Working alongside WHO and local health partners, Dr Khan assessed hospitals, laboratories and primary healthcare facilities operating under extremely challenging conditions. The mission focused on strengthening IPC measures, improving water safety, supporting surveillance for healthcare-associated infections, and identifying practical solutions to reduce risks in healthcare settings.

Drawing on experience from previous outbreak responses, the team promoted locally adapted interventions such as hand hygiene measures, triage systems and enhanced laboratory testing. The resilience and dedication of frontline health workers ensured continuation of care despite significant operational constraints.

The deployment underscored the critical role of local leadership, innovation and partnership in maintaining essential health services during complex humanitarian emergencies.

Link: [Stories from the field](#)



WHO occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) Surveillance Pillar B technical team, bringing together surveillance, infection prevention and control, and laboratory officers. Gaza, occupied Palestinian territory, August 2026. ©WHO



Dr Ali S. Khan works alongside frontline health workers in Gaza, supporting practical solutions to strengthen infection prevention and control, improve surveillance and reduce risks in healthcare settings. ©WHO

Reconciling Ebola Response and Community Needs to Prevent Transmission in DRC

In September 2026, Kennedy Muhindo Wema, a Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) specialist deployed through GOARN from the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), supported Ebola response efforts in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

During his deployment, Kennedy helped facilitate community dialogue in Mutumbi following resistance to a safe and dignified burial. By working closely with community leaders, local volunteers and response teams, he helped build trust, address concerns and identify culturally appropriate solutions that enabled public health measures to be implemented while respecting local practices.

Over an eight-week deployment, Kennedy strengthened community feedback mechanisms, supported the management of rumours and misinformation, and helped establish community watch brigades to improve local engagement and early detection of public health risks. His work demonstrated the critical role of risk communication and community engagement in building trust, improving acceptance of response measures and ensuring communities are active partners in outbreak response.

The deployment highlights the value of GOARN's multidisciplinary support to health emergencies, helping bridge technical response efforts with the realities and needs of affected communities.

[Link: Reconciling Ebola response and community needs to prevent transmission | WHO | Regional Office for Africa](#)



Kennedy Muhindo Wema, an RCCE specialist deployed through GOARN from Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine, supported the Ebola response in Ituri Province, DRC. ©WHO



In Mutumbi, Kennedy worked with community leaders and volunteers to listen to concerns, build trust and find culturally appropriate solutions during the Ebola response. ©WHO



By strengthening community feedback and addressing rumours and misinformation, Kennedy helped put communities at the heart of the Ebola response. ©WHO

Alerts and Information Sharing

GOARN Weekly Operations Call

In September, the GOARN Operational Support Team continued to host weekly operation calls to enhance coordination and timely information exchange among WHO and GOARN partners. These calls featured updates on emerging health threats providing signals by the WHO Public Health Intelligence team and an overview of operations supported by GOARN, and included updates about responses to public health events.

Key topics covered during the month included:

- **September 03:** Update on Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus (WHO), Update on the floods in Nepal (Tribhuvan University)
- **September 17:** Update on Ebola Disease caused by Bundibugyo Virus (WHO); Update on Cholera and Diphtheria in Haiti (PAHO)
- **September 24:** Update on Cholera in Haiti (PAHO and MSF)

These weekly calls remain an essential platform for keeping all partners informed and strengthening GOARN's collective preparedness and response efforts.

Global Public Health Threats Report

Throughout September 2026, the Global Public Health Threats Report was circulated to GOARN partners partaking in the weekly operations call, providing timely updates on emerging health risks worldwide.

Highlights include:

- **Week 36:** Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (Austria), Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus (Democratic Republic of the Congo, update to week 35/2026), Flash Floods (Nepal, update to week 35/2026), Launch of the Global Mpox Vaccine Stockpile Initiative (Worldwide).
- **Week 37:** Dengue (Italy), Chikungunya (Italy), Dengue (Bangladesh), Chikungunya (Nicaragua, update to week 32/2026), Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus (Democratic Republic of the Congo, update to week 36/2026), Detection of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes (United Kingdom), Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem (Timor-Leste), Elimination of Rabies as a Public Health Problem (Bhutan), End of outbreaks caused by circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (Burundi, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of the Congo, Uganda).
- **Week 38:** Seasonal Influenza (Republic of Korea), Airport Malaria (Germany), Attacks on Healthcare Facilities (Ukraine), West Nile Fever (European Union, update to week 34/2026), Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus (Democratic Republic of the Congo, update to week 37/2026), End of the Cyclosporiasis Outbreak (USA), Elimination of Rabies as a Public Health Problem (Chile), Updated WHO Guidelines for Malaria.
- **Week 39:** HIV (Fiji), Dengue (United States of America), Health and Humanitarian Emergency (Yemen), Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus (Democratic Republic of the Congo).
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Developed by the WHO Collaborating Centre for GOARN at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), with the German Federal Foreign Office, the Friedrich Loeffler Institute, and GOARN Operational Support Team input, the report supports GOARN's alert and risk assessment work. This report is shared routinely with experts and institutions who participate in the GOARN Weekly Operations Call.

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