

# Health workers strike threatens Ebola response in Nigeria

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Nigerian health workers' unions on Friday threatened to withhold help for emergency measures against Ebola because of an ongoing strike over pay and conditions.

"The [strike](#) will go on as long as the [government](#) refuses to honour the existing agreement with us," chairman of the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU), Biobele moye Joy Josiah, told AFP.

The government this week ordered screening of travellers from the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighbouring countries after a fresh outbreak of the [haemorrhagic fever](#) there.

But Josiah said: "None of our members will be involved in any Ebola screening until the government does the needful."

JOHESU comprises pharmacists, nurses, laboratory technologists and other paramedics in the public [health](#) sector, except doctors and dentists.

They walked out on April 18 over demands for pay parity with doctors and improved welfare.

The strike has paralysed services in federal government-owned hospitals and health centres.

On Wednesday, JOHESU extended the strike by directing its affiliates in Nigeria's 36 states to join following deadlock in talks with government.

Nigeria does not share a border with DR Congo but memories are still fresh of an Ebola outbreak in 2014 that killed seven people out of 19 confirmed cases.

The World Health Organization at the time praised the country's response for containing the spread of the virus, which left some 11,000 people dead in wider West Africa.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) said relevant agencies, including the port health services, have been mobilised to ensure the safety of passengers and other users.

"All equipment and personnel used in combatting the virus in 2014 are still very much at the airports," said FAAN spokeswoman Henrietta Yakubu.

"We have always had thermal scanners in our airports that monitor temperature of passengers and capture their pictures. We still have hand sanitisers in our restrooms too.

"When passengers walk pass the scanners, it registers their temperature. If yours is high, you are pulled aside for observation."

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