The Virchow Prize 2026 Awarded for Pioneering Work on Ebola, Advancing Global Epidemic Preparedness and Fostering Global Solidarity

Tuesday 2 June, 2026

Jean-Jacques Muyembe and Peter Piot are being honored with the international award of €500,000 for exceptional life-long leadership spanning five decades since the first outbreak of Ebola

Berlin, Germany – June 2, 2026: The Virchow Prize 2026 has been jointly awarded to Jean?Jacques Muyembe and Peter Piot for their pioneering and enduring leadership in the discovery, control, and understanding of epidemic threats, and for advancing equitable, multilateral cooperation and governance that have fundamentally strengthened global preparedness and solidarity in the face of infectious disease outbreaks.

The announcement was made today by the Virchow Foundation which is granting the annual award. The selection of the laureates by the independent Virchow Prize Committee was preceded by a nomination period that ended on February 28, followed by a three-month deliberation period.

This moment resonates with particular historical gravity: 2026 marks both fifty years since the emergence of Ebola and a renewed confrontation with the virus through the current outbreak and unpreparedness.

According to the committee, the careers of Jean?Jacques Muyembe and Peter Piot are anchored in a defining moment of modern infectious disease history: the first identified Ebola outbreak in 1976. Their collaboration demonstrated the necessity of crossing contextual, disciplinary and geographic boundaries, highlighting both the potential and the inequities inherent in global health partnerships. Over the decades, both Muyembe and Piot have worked – partly closely together, partly independent from each other in complementary ways – to transform epidemic research in an exemplary manner, firmly rooted in equity, reciprocity, and shared leadership.

Taken together, the laureates' contributions illustrate a continuum that is central to advancing health for all: from discovery to delivery, from local response to global coordination, from emergency action to long-term system strengthening. Their work has directly improved the ability to detect, understand, and control deadly outbreaks, while also influencing broader frameworks for addressing global health challenges in a manner that is equitable and inclusive.

By awarding the Virchow Prize 2026 equally to Muyembe and Piot, their scientific achievements and their commitment to strengthening health systems and fostering global solidarity are honored. The laureates' work embodies Rudolf Virchow's legacy that health is inseparable from social organisation, governance, and collective responsibility.

Full Article and detailed Virchow Prize Committee jury rationale at www.virchowprize.org/vp2026

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