

This is a situation report by the Interagency Collaboration on Ebola replacing situation reports previously produced by UNMEER. The report is produced by OCHA Regional Office for West and Central Africa in collaboration with WHO and humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 19 October to 1 November 2015. The next report will be issued on or around 17 November.

Highlights

- Guinea is last of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)-affected countries in West Africa currently recording active cases. As of 1 November, Sierra Leone had gone 37 days of the 42-day countdown to a declaration marking the end of Ebola virus transmission in the human population on 7 November, if no further cases are reported. Liberia as of 1 November has reached day 60 of the 90 days of enhanced surveillance and has been free of EVD transmission since 3 September.
- In Guinea, a government-led 21-day surveillance campaign is underway in the new active area and surrounding villages, namely Tana market and the sub-prefecture of Kaliah, Forécariah.
- In Liberia, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has confirmed its support to an EVD Emergency Preparedness and Response consortium led by International Rescue Committee (IRC) and including other humanitarian partners.
- In Sierra Leone, WHO and partners are launching a full-scale viral persistence study after the completion of the pilot study. The full study will enrol female survivors as well as males, and will assay a wide range of body fluids.

Epidemiological status

- In the two weeks up to 1 November four new cases were reported in Guinea. All four are from a single family in the subprefecture of Kaliah, in Forécariah, and were registered contacts. The cases are a 25-year-old woman, her 10-year-old son, her 4-year-old daughter and her newborn baby who was delivered in an Ebola treatment centre. The mother of the children subsequently died, while the infant continues to receive treatment.
- There were no new cases reported in Sierra Leone in the two weeks up to 1 November. If no new cases are reported, Sierra Leone will be declared free of Ebola virus transmission in the human population on 7 November.
- As of 1 November, Liberia has reached day 60 of the 90 days of active surveillance and has been free of EVD transmission since 3 September.

Cross-border collaboration

Guinea is last of the EVD-affected countries in West Africa with active cases, the majority of which are concentrated in Forécariah, along the border with Sierra Leone. There are 53 official border-crossing points between **Sierra Leone** and Guinea. At the peak of the epidemic, significant numbers of people in Kambia, which borders Forécariah, were exposed to EVD as a result of high migration flows and significant economic activity between cross-border communities. With this experience in mind and the risk of cross-border transmission remaining high, the Governments of Sierra Leone and Guinea signed a



Health checkpoint at Soumba, region of Dubréka. Credit: IOM Guinea/ L. Simonet.

Memorandum of understanding (MoU) in March 2015 for national-level supervision of cross-border Ebola interventions, information sharing and enforcement of Ebola quarantine in the border communities. Today, cross-border activities such as border control, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and other public health measures continue in order to achieve and maintain the common goal of zero cases.

Under the recommendations of the Emergency Committee set up under the International Health Regulations (IHR), **Sierra Leone** will continue general border screening for EVD. The districts of Sierra Leone which border Guinea have been recommended to heighten vigilance, and in Kambia, authorities are working with their counterparts in Guinea to ensure collaboration, timely information sharing, and follow up, for example of missing contacts. At the crossing point, any individual meeting the EVD case definition is isolated immediately, tested for Ebola virus disease and remains under observation until the lab test results are known. A number of NGOs and IOM have provided training to border officials and community volunteers to ensure correct health screening and safe practices to curb cross-border Ebola transmission. Health screening procedures and hygiene practices continue to be enforced on the Sierra Leone side of the border-crossing points. Identifying people with unexplained febrile illness consistent with potential EVD infection and appropriate follow up actions are necessary to prevent possible spread from one country to another.

In **Liberia**, UNDP's Enhanced Border Surveillance Project has launched a procurement process to enhance the logistical capacity of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) and the Liberia National Police (LNP). This comes in the wake of findings from a reconnaissance field trip to three of the border counties that found very limited logistical capacity on the ground. In addition to 16 vehicles already delivered to the LNP and BIN, other equipment, materials and logistics to be provided include bio hazard suits, tents and accessories, rain gear, dinghies, solar panels, hand-held infrared thermometers, about 70 motorcycles with helmets, radio and PA equipment. The Liberian Ministry of Health (MoH) in collaboration with partners, kicked off the training of key County Health Teams (CHT) and District Health Teams (DHT) actors in border counties, on the national Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) strategy, including the community events-based surveillance (CEBS) module. During the reporting period, cross-border community meetings were held in ten districts of the five border counties as well as Yomou Prefecture in Guinea to build capacity of community leaders, community focal points and general Community Health Volunteers to facilitate community events-based surveillance.

Regional

- The Genexpert diagnostic system has been put in place by WHO and partners in several laboratories in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to support long-term national testing capacity.

Guinea

On 22 October in Forécariah, a government-led 21-day surveillance campaign began in the newly active area and surrounding villages, namely Tana market and the sub-prefecture of Kaliah. Contact tracing, community mobilization, triage, hygiene information provision and radio broadcasting were implemented. The campaign was accompanied by a door-to-door active case-finding strategy in the surrounding village of Kaliah.

Contact tracing / surveillance

- As of 1 November, 382 contacts were under follow-up in Guinea, with the majority of these contacts located in Forécariah.
- The Guinean Red Cross national society with the



Red Cross mobile radio Radio Santeya journalists in the studio interacting with the community. Credit: Guinean Red Cross.

support of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) worked to establish a strong community of Red Cross volunteers along the borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. Nearly 180 volunteers from 30 villages are working with their counterparts from the Sierra Leone Red Cross in community-based surveillance focusing on community events alerts including, inter alia, community deaths, the registration of travellers in villages, door-to-door visits to detect new suspected cases among the community, and dialogue with key informants.

- In the upcoming months the Guinean Red Cross will scale-up its activities and include new sub-prefectures in Forécariah and Boké and cover Guéckédou prefecture before the end of the year. These three prefectures border Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Liberia, and the Red Cross has intensified awareness raising and active case finding activities to make sure population movements on both sides of the borders do not lead to cross-border transmission.

Community engagement and social mobilization

- UNICEF supported the National Coordination for the Ebola Response in conducting the micro-containment campaign in five villages in Tana district. From 22 October onwards, a total of 100 households were visited by social mobilizers who provided information to inhabitants about the disease and distributed WASH kits. UNICEF will also construct two water points to provide residents with access to clean drinking water and improve overall hygiene.
- UNICEF is conducting a separate campaign to sensitize the population of 30 villages and to identify other people who may be in contact with other sick individuals.
- The Guinean Red Cross through its network of 347 beneficiary communications volunteers is conducting community engagement activities. During the reporting period, the following activities have been carried out :
 - ✓ Awareness sessions and campaigns and community social mobilization through door-to-door provision of information, community dialogues, and focus groups, which reached 13,850 people;
 - ✓ Organization of campaigns on hygiene promotion in the Ebola context which reached 2,450 households in Forécariah prefecture and the city of Conakry;
 - ✓ Distribution of 890 hygiene kits including hand washing kits, soaps and household chlorine.

Safe and dignified burials

- The Guinean Red Cross / IFRC continue their efforts to stop the transmission chain through Safe and Dignified Burials (SDB). From 19 to 25 October, 600 SDBs (among which 599 are community deaths) were conducted, 455 houses disinfected and 599 swabs tested using a new diagnostic called OraQuick. Since the end of June 2015 there has been an average of 620-680 SDB per week.

Nutrition

- The final report of the 2015 SMART survey will be published in the coming week. According to its preliminary findings, there are over 75,000 Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases in Guinea, with the largest concentration located in the region of Kankan.

Food security

- WFP will resume school feeding activities on 9 November, when the schools reopen for the new academic year. As part of its scale up, WFP has opened school canteens in areas formerly affected by Ebola. To date, WFP school feeding activities have reached 1, 605 primary schools supporting more than 240, 000 children.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF and the Regional Directorate of Water, Environment and Forests (WEF) in Conakry have trained 60 teachers from the urban communes of Dixinn and Ratoma in "WASH in schools", and 50 health workers from 25 health centers close to the border with Liberia on proper hygiene standards in health facilities, in partnership with the Regional Directorate of Health in N'Zérékoré.

Survivors

- There are an estimated 1,274 Ebola survivors in Guinea. National authorities are finalizing a strategy to support people recovering from Ebola in an effort to prevent future transmission and address their unique physical, psychological and socio-economic vulnerabilities triggered by the disease.
- OCHA conducted an assessment mission to N'Zérékoré, where the largest concentration of Ebola survivors currently resides. The Office identified key partners working in survivor support and assessed cash and in-kind assistance being provided by partners.

Other

- On 31 October the Constitutional Court of Guinea confirmed the victory of incumbent President Alpha Condé, who has been re-elected for his second term with 57.84 per cent of votes. Three of the seven opponents have appealed to the Constitutional Court following the result of the 11 October presidential election.

Sierra Leone

As of 1 November, Sierra Leone had gone 37 days of the 42-day countdown to a declaration marking the end of Ebola virus transmission in the human population on 7 November, if no further cases are reported.

Health

- A Genexpert training was conducted at Connaught Hospital for five laboratory technicians on infection prevention and control (IPC) and use of the device. Trainers were drawn from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS), the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) and WHO. The Genexpert diagnostic system can detect the RNA of the EVD virus in a blood sample by looking at the structure of the genes to establish a link with the virus.
- The comparative study of lateral flow rapid diagnostic tests carried out by WHO and partners has started. The study will compare three candidate tests with the Genexpert diagnostic system, using 25 archived positive samples and 200 negatives.
- WHO and partners are launching a full-scale viral persistence study after the completion of the pilot study. The full study will enroll female survivors as well as males, and will assay a wide range of bodily fluids.
- IDSR training was provided by WHO to 86 healthcare workers from the Western Area and Port Loko districts. 62 healthcare workers are already trained and so far 12 districts have been covered.
- WHO shared a draft plan for strengthening Rapid Response Teams with the MoHS. Standard Operating Procedures for Rapid Response Teams are being developed by MoHS in collaboration with the IDSR and Laboratory working groups.
- Preparation for the Maternal and Child Health week in November 2015 to deliver integrated health services to women and children under five is on-going.
- To strengthen health system resilience in the post-Ebola period, UNICEF is supporting human resource capacity building for quality care, infection prevention and control, as one of the integral components of all trainings including on-the-job trainings for maternal, newborn and child health.
- IOM IPC trainers in collaboration with Ebola Response Consortium partner Welbodi Partnership have designed a 'mentorship plan' to provide further support to two hospitals in Freetown and also provided training for 1,197 healthcare workers at three government hospitals in Freetown.
- On 23 October, IOM together with partner International Medical Corps (IMC) started an IPC and WASH intervention in 21 private not-for-profit hospitals with the deployment of three teams of 19 staff members to 11 facilities in Freetown-Western Area, Moyamba, Bo and Kenema districts.



Sierra Leone's 42-day countdown will end on 7 November if no other case is reported before that date. Credit: OCHA / I. Brandau.

Contact tracing / surveillance

- During the reporting period, UNFPA supported 1,267 enhanced contact tracers and 233 supervisors with incentives and logistical support to assist active surveillance, maternal death surveillance and malaria monitoring in all districts.

Community engagement and social mobilization

- Community level health advocacy is shifting from Ebola to other priority conditions while still reinforcing community vigilance for suspected EVD cases, early reporting of illness and deaths in all the districts across the country.
- A 3-day capacity building training for 32 WHO Community Engagement and Social Mobilization Officers from all 14 districts was held in Freetown. The aim of the training was to update the participants on national priority health programmes and identify key issues and challenges that require social mobilization/community engagement support.
- UNICEF and social mobilization partners engaged 12 communities in Patebana, Bombali District to discuss the utilization of Peripheral Health Units (PHU). Similar dialogues will be rolled out across other PHUs in the district.
- UNICEF supported the social mobilization team from partners who have visited 2,014 communities across 69 wards of the Western Area, to disseminate key messages on not washing the dead, hand washing, safe and dignified burials and building trust in health care facilities. Also some 1,500 traditional healers were engaged and participated in activities to identify the sick in the community and encourage 117 calls.
- GOAL and UNICEF trained 80 survivors in the Western Area on the registration and verification process of other survivors.

Research and development

- Laboratory working group and FIND are working together with Case Management to streamline the application and use of Genexpert at PIH/PCMH - the national referral centre for maternity/obstetric care - in an effort to facilitate turn-over time for patients in the isolation unit and subsequently improve quality and accessibility of care.

Child protection

- UNICEF partners registered 70 Ebola-affected children, followed-up on 362 reunified children, reunified 9 children with their families, distributed 168 Family tracing and reunification (FTR) kits, engaged 499 children in activity planning and monitoring at community level, provided 519 children and families with individual and/or group counselling, while 876 children participated in recreational activities. 78 volunteers were engaged in psychosocial support community activities.
- The UNICEF Child Protection team assessed and verified 136 Ebola affected orphans from 16 communities, and 78 orphans have been provided with FTR kits, recreational and learning materials.

Education

- UNICEF and District Education Office (DEO) launched the first two rounds of school based teacher trainings in 4,400 schools on Guidance Note and Protocol (GNP) for safe schools in the context of Ebola.

Nutrition

- A targeted WFP supplementary feeding programme started for pregnant and nursing mothers and moderately malnourished children of age 6-59 months. Partners from five districts with the highest levels of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) are being trained to screen for MAM using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes and programme implementation. The programme directly supports the Government of Sierra Leone's national Ebola recovery strategy to restore access to basic health services. Targeted children and mothers will be able to access critical maternal and child health services through peripheral health units (PHUs) at no cost, helping to bring back confidence amongst the population in the health system.

Food security

- In all rural districts of Sierra Leone, WFP provided a mix of food and/or cash assistance to targeted households to increase food access through the lean season. In the last week, over 48,000 beneficiaries have received either an in-kind food ration or an unconditional cash transfer for the value of the food basket.

WASH

- IOM is distributing 4,000 hygiene kits through village task force and community leaders in Freetown, Tonkolili and Port Loko districts. The kit distribution is combined with a one-hour training on handwashing, hygiene promotion, and basic disease symptom identification and reporting.
- UNICEF delivered 176,000 liters of water to 1,257 people in water-stressed and Ebola-affected communities, Ebola treatment centres and other health facilities. In Port Loko, 82,500 liters were delivered, reaching 742,500 people using the hand washing stations.

Liberia

As of 1 November, Liberia has reached day 60 of the 90 days of active surveillance and has been free of EVD since 3 September.

On 26 October, the Liberian Ministry of Health presented its 2015-2021 training plan for laboratories. Among other topics, it includes Ebola specimen collection, packaging and transportation, IDSR Laboratory component, clinical diagnostic techniques, good clinical laboratory practice and medical laboratory training.

The OraQuick Ebola Test Liberia rollout plan has also been presented. The rollout of Rapid diagnostic tests (RDT) should improve compliance with dead body swabbing, provide an alternate technology for presumptive point of care diagnosis of suspect EVD cases and safely and effectively manage the number of samples submitted for Ebola full RT-PCR lab analysis.



Vehicles donated by UNDP to the Liberia National Police to strengthen border surveillance. Credit: UNDP/ Oct 2015.

Enhanced surveillance and rapid response

- OFDA has confirmed that they will support an EVD Emergency Preparedness and Response Consortium led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and including Global Communities, IOM, IMC, Save the Children, Concern and Medical Teams International. The proposed intervention will ensure continuity in the support to county health teams for their emergency preparedness and response plans and ensure that residual capacity to support a response remains on the ground throughout 2016.
- The project complements existing and upcoming programming areas led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and WHO and will transition into longer term development initiatives such as the Essential Package of Healthcare Services (EPHS), Partnerships for Advancing Community-based Services (PACS), Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) and Collaborative Support for Health (CSH).
- The proposed Emergency Preparedness and Response Consortium capitalizes on partners' ongoing and pre-existing relationships with CHTs and local communities as well as technical areas of expertise to ensure that planning exercises continue in the coming year, and to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated and understood should another outbreak arise.

Health system restoration

- On 26 October, the third round of the three-day Integrated National Polio, Vitamin-A and Deworming campaign supported by UNICEF came to an end in most parts of the country. UNICEF supported social mobilization activities for the campaign and in the preceding week conducted advocacy meetings at national and sub-national levels; distributed communication materials to all counties. Close to 1,800 frontline mobilisers were

deployed across the country before and during the campaign. Preliminary field reports indicate improved community acceptance compared to the last round in June.

- The Grand Bassa Disease Surveillance Team supported by Concern benefited from the IDSR training workshop facilitated by the County Health Team with support from WHO. The objective of the workshop was to help healthcare and community workers identify priority diseases in line with standard case definitions approved by WHO and to promote quality reporting by those participants. The training will be rolled out to community healthcare workers in November. Concern's IPC teams continued to provide mentoring and supervision in the nine Montserrado County health facilities monitored by Concern.
- The MoH in collaboration with WHO supported the qualitative health worker study, which seeks to improve health workers' availability and performance, targeting five counties (Bomi, Lofa, Margibi, Nimba, River Gee). Data collection has started in Bomi county and Margibi county.
- On 21-23 October WHO provided training on HINARI (WHO's online health library) for 31 participants from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) and several medical institutions. The MOHSW has also signed a 5-year license agreement which will enable health workers and researchers to access biomedical and health literature.

Education

- The UNICEF-supported training designed to enhance the knowledge and pedagogical skills of the teachers and Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) members in Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) to enable them to effectively support the psychosocial needs of children is ongoing. 6,163 teachers have been trained in pedagogy, and 2,760 PTA members have been reached with psychosocial support training.
- The distribution of teaching and learning materials continues and has so far reached 1,230 schools, benefiting 274,481 (over 26 per cent of all students in Liberia) and 21,320 teachers.

WASH

- The Concern WASH team is currently in Phase 2 of their EU programme with the objectives of constructing 18 new wells and rehabilitation of 10 existing hand dug wells in Grand Bassa County. The construction and rehabilitation of 12 school latrines has also started.
- In Lofa County the Concern WASH Team finished the construction of five new hand-dug wells and rehabilitation of four existing hand-dug wells. Construction of two concrete culvert road crossings (Zorzor and Salayae District) was completed. The WASH team organized events to observe the Global Hand Washing Day Celebration on 15 October 2015.
- Concern's WASH Team developed four WASH Committees in Brewerville (Montserrado County) at the facilities where Concern is constructing triage and isolation units and rehabilitating WASH facilities.