

UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) External Situation Report

16 December 2014

KEY POINTS

- Liberia will hold its delayed senatorial elections on Saturday 20 December.
- A WFP-constructed Ebola Treatment Center (ETC) in Coyah, Guinea, is scheduled to be handed over to local authorities today.
- 18,464 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) have been reported in the three most affected countries, where there have been 6,841 reported deaths.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. Liberia will hold delayed senatorial elections on December 20, the National Election Commission said on Sunday, a day after the Supreme Court ruled the vote should go ahead despite the EVD outbreak. The court had suspended campaigning for the vote last month, while it considered a petition from a group that included some former government officials and political party representatives. The group had warned that electioneering risked spreading the virus.
2. WHO Assistant Director-General Bruce Aylward has stated that the failure of Sierra Leone's strategy for fighting EVD may be down to a missing ingredient: a big shock that could change people's behavior and prevent further infection, such as what happened in Monrovia in August when the disease had a big flare-up there. "Every new place that gets infected goes through that same terrible learning curve where a lot of people have to die ... before those behaviors start to change," Aylward said. Sierra Leone's Health Minister Abu Bakarr Fofanah said the government was considering banning some unsafe practices. He recognized however that it would be difficult to police such a law. Fofanah noted that some areas of eastern Sierra Leone that were hit hardest early in the epidemic -- around the towns of Kenema and Kailahun -- have seen a massive reduction in case numbers as people change behavior. "The areas that are now doing badly are the areas that were affected last. They are still on the learning curve."
3. The UN Security Council on Monday extended the mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for another nine months until September 30, 2015. The mission will continue to provide, among other tasks, humanitarian assistance and electoral support, as well as human rights promotion and protection. The council recognized that the EVD outbreak in Liberia has slowed the efforts of the government to advance certain governance and national reform priorities, and emphasized the need for continued progress on constitutional and institutional reforms, especially of the rule of law and security sectors and the national reconciliation processes.
4. The UN Economic Commission for Africa has asked for more debt cancellations for the three countries hardest hit by EVD. The commission said Monday that it is crucial that the current health crisis not be a catalyst for financial distress in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. Carlos Lopez, the executive secretary of the commission, appealed on Monday for loan forgiveness.

Human Rights

5. NSTR

Response Efforts and Health

6. On 11 December, the Logistics Task Force composed of the logistics commission of the National Ebola Response Cell (NERC) and international partners, including UNMEER, visited the newly constructed ETC in Coyah town (Guinea). WFP commenced construction on 25 October, and the center is scheduled to be handed over to local authorities today. The center will be operated by Guinean health workers reporting to the NERC with support from a number of Cuban doctors.
7. Liberia has begun treating EVD patients with serum therapy - a treatment made from the blood of recovered survivors. If a person has successfully fought off EVD infection, they will have antibodies in their blood that can attack the virus. Doctors can then take a sample of their blood and turn it into

a serum - by removing the red blood cells but keeping the antibodies - which can be used to treat other patients. Patients treated in the UK and the US have already received this type of treatment. The treatment is being given by doctors at the ELWA Hospital in Monrovia.

8. An Australian-run medical center for EVD patients has opened in Sierra Leone this weekend. Britain recently completed the building, which is near Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown. In line with best practice the center will commence operations with five beds. Operations will be gradually scaled up to full capacity at 100 beds, under strict guidelines to ensure infection control procedures are working effectively and trained staff and safety practices are in place. The center is run by the private Australian company Aspen Medical, with financing from the Australian government. It will be staffed by medical personnel from Australia, New Zealand and Sierra Leone.
9. A pilot project in Guinea spearheaded by the NERC with support from experts from Columbia University, on collection and transmission of contact tracing information via mobile phones, is being conducted in Conakry, Dubreka and Coyah prefectures. To date, a training of trainers has been provided to 27 supervisors and 130 community agents working in these 3 prefectures. The pilot will test whether the data collected via mobile transmission corresponds to the data collected via the current paper-based system. If the pilot phase is successful, the NERC is to decide whether to roll out this solution in the country's 33 prefectures.
10. 18,464 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of EVD have been reported in the three most affected countries, where there have been 6,841 reported deaths.

Logistics

11. WFP is working with the National Ebola Taskforce and government of Liberia customs officials to extend the customs bonded area at the airport in Monrovia to include the WFP Airport Transit Hub. This will facilitate the immediate offloading and safe storage of relief cargo until required for dispatch to key locations throughout the country.
12. WFP is deploying a 40 metric ton DAF truck to support an ETU in Greenville, Liberia, which was built by the US Department of Defense and managed by MSB, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. This truck will ensure the rapid movement of essential equipment from Greenville Port to the treatment facility.
13. WFP has rehabilitated Kankan airstrip as a preparedness measure for a potential rise in EVD cases in the area, following a request by the government of Guinea. The airstrip has now been cleared to receive UNHAS flights, facilitating the potential deployment of staff to the area.
14. For regular logistics operational information please visit <http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ebola14>.

Resource Mobilisation

15. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements, now totaling US\$ 1.5 billion, has been funded for \$ 1.08 billion, which is around 72 percent of the total ask.
16. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has US\$ 108.8 million in commitments. In total \$ 131 million has been pledged.
17. All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (<http://fts.unocha.org>) of contributions by e-mailing: fts@un.org.

Outreach and Education

18. NSTR

Essential Services

19. In a recent sms-based poll of 400 small-scale food traders in Sierra Leone, carried out by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, over 40% of traders reported that markets operated at reduced levels. Over 50% of traders in six districts reported below-average stocks, including both quarantined and non-quarantined zones (Bo, Bonthe, Kambia, Kenema, Moyamba, and Port Loko). Travel restrictions and high transportation costs were the most commonly cited reason for below-average stock levels on markets.

Upcoming Events

- NSTR

Attachments and resources

- Reliefweb: [Maps on the EVD response](#)