



PRESS RELEASE

NEW UNMEER CHIEF ARRIVES IN LIBERIA TO ASSESS EBOLA RESPONSE

Monrovia, 06 January 2015 – Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the new Head of the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) arrives in Liberia today as part of his first tour of the three countries most affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak. In each country, he will assess response efforts to stop the Ebola outbreak, and determine urgent UN priorities going forward.

On his arrival, Ould Cheikh Ahmed met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as well as UNMEER and UNMIL staff. He also discussed response efforts with the diplomatic community. Tomorrow, he travels to Grand Cape Mount County where he will interact with local, traditional and religious leaders, as well as Ebola survivors, before heading to Sierra Leone.

"I want to visit the affected countries not only to see what's already been done – I know we have made a lot of progress – but to see what we can do to get to zero cases as fast as possible," said Ould Cheikh Ahmed. "Beyond that, we also need to scale up our efforts to reestablish basic social services, strengthen health services, support economic activity and build these countries' resilience."

Ould Cheikh Ahmed replaced former Special Representative Anthony Banbury on 5 January 2015.

"The UN is wholly committed to supporting all affected and at-risk communities to contain the Ebola outbreak and end this crisis," said Ould Cheikh Ahmed. "We need to pay special attention to the border areas. Zero cases – in Liberia and this entire region – must be everyone's goal."

During Ould Cheikh Ahmed's visit, he will meet with the Presidents of Sierra Leone and Guinea, as well as other Ebola Response partners in-country. He will also visit Ebola Treatment Units and national Ebola Response Centres to see how UNMEER's coordination efforts are playing out on the ground.

As of 31 December 2014, seven of Liberia's 15 counties had reported no new Ebola cases. Still, 22 new cases were reported in Grand Cape Mount, 88 in Montserrado, and 14 in Margibi.

"Clearly, we have more work to do to get to zero," said Ould Cheikh Ahmed. "UNMEER will stand together with the people affected and their governments until we bring this crisis to an end."
