

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 21 September to 05 October 2015. The next report will be issued on or around 20 October.

Highlights

- In Kindia, Guinea, the National Coordination is hosting an Ebola Survivors Workshop on 5-7 October. The workshop will articulate a Response Strategy to support the more than 1,300 people who survived the disease.
- Following heavy rains in Sierra Leone in mid-September, predominantly in the Freetown area, two temporary settlement areas were established to house the affected people. Infection prevention and control (IPC) measures have been established in each camp, along with hygiene messaging and social mobilisation, to minimise the risk of EVD and other infections within the camp.

Epidemiological status

- In week 40 (from 28 September to 4 October 2015), no new cases of Ebola virus disease were reported in either Guinea or Sierra Leone. This was the first complete epidemiological week without new cases since March 2014.
- Nonetheless, there remains a significant risk of further transmission. Two high-risk contacts in Sierra Leone have been lost to follow-up. In Guinea, in the 42 days to 3 October, an estimated total of 295 unregistered contacts remain in the community.
- As of 3 October, over 500 contacts were under follow-up in Guinea, with the majority of contacts (388) located in Forecariah, and 114 in Conakry. All contacts are associated with the Ratoma chain of transmission. 3 October marked the last day of follow-up of all 781 contacts in Bombali, Sierra Leone. All contacts associated with the Kambia chain of transmission have now completed follow-up.
- In week 39 (from 21 to 27 September 2015) four new cases were identified in Guinea, while no new cases were reported from Sierra Leone. The four cases were all from the prefecture of Forecariah, and are all known contacts of the 10-year old girl that was reported in week 38. Of the four cases, three contacts were confirmed EVD positive in the village of Tana and one in the village of Kiterin. Two of the four new cases are traditional healers reported to have treated the girl. All four cases are receiving treatment.

Survivors

In **Guinea**, there are 1,261 Ebola survivors. To address the specific needs tied to their condition, the National Coordination, with the support of key partners, is hosting an Ebola Survivors Workshop on 5-7 October in Kindia, aimed at articulating a targeted Response Strategy. Key government ministries and over 40 national and international actors will meet over three days to hear from survivors, physical and mental health experts and stigma and socio-economic specialists. The outcome of the meeting will be an inter-sector strategy to support Ebola survivors.



International Medical Corps (IMC) training at Phebe Hospital, Liberia. Credit: IMC

Sierra Leone has over 4,000 EVD survivors including 1,579 children, the largest number of Ebola survivors in the region. The “Comprehensive Package for EVD Survivors” is a Government of Sierra Leone-developed support programme for survivors, with an integrated approach, which includes health care, psychosocial and livelihood support.

In Liberia the Survivors Network is the umbrella group coordinating and overseeing activities in support of Ebola survivors in the country. An integrated response including clinical health care, psycho-social support, economic and livelihood support as well as legal protection is promoted. Partners such as the Red Cross, MSF, MDM, IMC, WFP, IOM, OHCHR/UNMIL and UNICEF are providing support packages and counselling to about 1,200 survivors. Four health facilities have a dedicated survivors’ care wing; however they are all in Monrovia and Bomi and a better coverage country-wide is critically needed.

Regional

Cross-border collaboration

- In Liberia, the Border Coordination Group (BCG) continues to assess the level of preparedness at ports of entry, major crossing points and border communities. This activity is part of the health response strategy of the humanitarian contingency plan for the potential post-election influx of Guinean refugees or Liberian returnees from Guinea into Liberia. BCG partners will conduct county coordination meetings to prepare local actors, review contingency plans and identify specific resource gaps at targeted ports of entry and health facilities.
- A cross-border meeting was held on 29 September between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire border county authorities to discuss the security situation, social cohesion and the planned return of Ivorian refugees following the border re-opening. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) facilitated the meeting in Grabo, which included the Superintendents of River Gee and Maryland and Regional BIN Commander for Maryland, River Gee and Grand Kru.

Guidance

- A WHO and CDC joint document on contact tracing has been published on the WHO website: (<http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/contact-tracing/en/>).

Guinea

The number of Ebola cases has declined significantly since August. In July, 50 confirmed cases were reported against 10 in August and four in September, a decrease of 94% compared to July.

Health

- There are currently 11 patients present in three Ebola Treatment Centers (Conakry, Coyah and Forécariah).

Operations / Logistics

- An active case-finding operation (Operation Porte-à-Porte) was carried out from September 28 to October 01 by WHO and partners. The operation had three main components: house to house search for suspect cases; IPC ring reinforcement; and social mobilization/community awareness raising. Approximately 900 households were visited in the districts of Dixinn and Ratoma.



Opening of Guinea's national survivors' conference in Kindia, 5-7 October. Credit: I.Brandau/OCHA

- The ring-IPC approach is currently being implemented on a pilot basis in several areas of Conakry. The optimum size for an IPC ring is under discussion. The results of an evaluation of the first rings are expected in the next few days.
- WFP's Special Operation (SO) 200773 created in August 2014 will end on 31 December 2015. The organization has implemented a transition strategy designed to shift from an emergency response to a gradual recovery.
- UNDSS has recently advised UN agencies to restrict movement into and out of Conakry from 4-18 October in light of the upcoming elections.

Contact tracing / surveillance

- The National Coordination Cell, in collaboration with partners involved in the response against Ebola, validated on 26 September the implementation of various micro projects on the active case search strategy in Ratoma and Dixinn, Conakry. The campaign, which ran from 29 September to 02 October, focused on door to door activities, household education and infection prevention and control. These activities are expected to strengthen the epidemiological surveillance system.
- As of 05 October, 508 out of 509 people have been monitored with a follow-up rate of 99.8%.

Protection / psychosocial support

- UNICEF and partners trained 41 community leaders in child protection and psychosocial support, bringing the total of trained community leaders to 7,632. They also sensitized 289 key leaders and 2,283 people to prevent stigmatization of Ebola survivors. This activity was implemented through the organization of 118 community dialogues, 127 educative sessions.
- UNICEF and partners organized 848 plays and recreational sessions, in which 1,435 children who had not previously participated were included, including 182 orphans. This brings the total number of children that have received psychosocial support to 120,806.
- During the period covered by this report, cash transfer support was provided by humanitarian partners to 55 parents/caretakers of 200 orphans. To date a total number of 5,606 orphaned children out of 6,193 have been provided with cash transfer.

Food Security

- In the context of the transition strategy, WFP has organized food distributions in food insecure areas and cash transfers to eligible Ebola survivors of US\$84 for a period of three months.
- WFP will resume its School Meals Programme on 05 October, when primary schools re-open for the new year. WFP provided hot school meals to 248,930 children in 1,605 schools throughout the 2014-2015 school year. This aims to improve the attendance rates of elementary school students. As an incentive to encourage girls to stay enrolled in school, WFP also provides a take-home ration of vegetable oil for girls who attend school regularly.

Other

- On 3 October, clashes between supporters of the presidential party and UFDG (opposition party) members took place in N'Zérékoré in Forest Guinea. According to media and security sources, one person was killed, 80 people were injured of which several by bullets, shops and houses were set on fire. The situation remains tense, and the Government has reinforced security measures in N'Zérékoré.
- Clashes were also reported in Mamou town (Mamou region) opposing the same supporters. Some people were injured. No figures are available yet.

Sierra Leone

Following the discharge of all those in quarantine in Kambia and Bombali, and with no new cases identified or in treatment, Sierra Leone has once again begun the countdown to zero +42 days. The NERC has recommended a modest approach to the countdown, ensuring full readiness and vigilance. Efforts to ensure support and comprehensive integrated care to survivors is currently a key focus of the work.

Health

- On 29 September, IOM conducted a basic IPC refresher training for 35 health care workers, and an induction to IPC and handwashing station sensitization for 32 community leaders. A two-day basic IPC training for 77 health care workers also took place from 30 September – 01 October.
- Preparations are underway for the implementation of Polio National Immunization Days campaign to immunize an estimated 1.4 million children under five years nationwide. The campaign will attempt to trace all children who missed their routine vaccination, and administer the missed dose to them.
- A five-day Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Training of Trainers was conducted in Western Area for Western Area, Port Loko, and Koinadugu districts with 26 participants from the three districts and selected staff from the Department of Disease Prevention and Control in attendance. They will cascade the training to health workers in their districts within the next three weeks.



Handwashing facilities outside each tent in Attouga Stadium. Credit: A. Hearn / OCHA

Contact tracing / surveillance

- All contacts in Kambia district were released from quarantine on 28 September after completing 21 days mandatory EVD quarantine in Sella Kafta village. A further 781 contacts were discharged from quarantine on 4 October, from Robuya village in Bombali district.
- UNFPA supported 32 contact tracers and supervisors to facilitate the monitoring of 781 contacts. None of these contacts have developed signs or symptoms that fit case definition of EVD.
- IOM-WHO-CDC will take part in a joint 9-day mobility mapping pilot exercise with over 30 participants focusing on category land border crossings in Kambia and seaports in Port Loko.

Community engagement and social mobilization

- Isolated high risk contacts were linked with their families through audio and video messaging in Bombali. 363 traditional leaders, including youth and women leaders were actively leading community engagement efforts in 121 identified hotspots and silent communities throughout the district. Over 20,000 persons were reached through these efforts.
- UNICEF's social mobilization partner – Focus 1000 – mobilized religious leaders to include Ebola related messaging during festive seasons reaching over 20,000 people.
- Social mobilizers from partner organizations – Restless Development, Red Cross, Marie Stopes and International Medical Corps – engaged 4,468 households in 614 communities, reaching 21,737 persons across the seven chiefdoms.

Research and development

- An observational cohort study, examining the persistence of the Ebola virus in body fluids of EVD survivors in Sierra Leone, is currently underway. The study is led by the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, and

partnered by WHO and US-CDC. The study is comprised of a pilot and a main study. The pilot study commenced in May 2015, has enrolled 100 men and is assessing semen samples only. The main study is due to commence in October, will enroll both men and women, and test a wide range of body fluids.

Child Protection

- In Kambia, UNICEF and partners provided psychosocial support and psychological first aid sessions to 227 quarantined persons, distributed 300 children family tracing and reunification kits, as well as recreational and learning kits to 430 children. In Bombali, the psychosocial teams provided counselling to 761 people in the quarantined homes and to the 22 at the Paramedical Holding Centre.

Education

- For the 'Back to School' campaign, 1,151 households in 103 communities, and 126 community leaders were reached. An additional 1,002 school children were reached on personal hygiene messaging.

Food Security

- In September, WFP reached nearly 140,000 people with food assistance to EVD affected cases, to contain the spread of the virus, and to protect Ebola-driven vulnerable groups. Over the last week, WFP provided an additional two week ration to all households that were quarantined in Robureh, Bombali District. Food rations were also provided to high risk contacts and medical staff at the holding centre and the provision of three meals per day was ensured. In former Ebola hotspot communities, WFP is providing a mix of food and cash assistance through the lean season to promote food access for the most vulnerable households.
- The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) led by WFP and FAO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Security (MAFFS) and other partners, is underway. Data is being collected from 30,000 households in all chiefdoms to gain a better understanding of how the EVD outbreak has affected livelihoods and food security, and to better design interventions that will have the largest impacts for addressing food insecurity and nutrition for post-Ebola recovery.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF installed a total of five tanks with a combined storage capacity of 23,000 litres and delivered 261,000 litres of water to EVD affected population of Bombali District. An additional 88,000 litres of water was provided to the quarantined households and 12,000 litres were delivered to the various health check points in Kambia District.

Liberia

Liberia has not had any confirmed case in more than 80 days but the level of enhanced surveillance at County level is still below the objectives set by the Ministry of Health (MoH). During the past week only five counties reported regularly suspect cases and swabbed bodies.

Laboratories are still facing lingering issues such as unpaid staff, shortage of reagents and sub-standard safety mechanisms. This undermines the objective of 100% bodies swabbed and tested.

Enhanced Surveillance and rapid response

- EVD Rapid response and EVD ambulance services continue to operate in Bong, Margibi, Nimba and Montserrado Counties, run by IMC.



School children in Montserrado washing their hands before classes start, October 2015. Credit: Mirva Helenius/IFRC

Ambulance teams are dispatched upon alert from the Ebola hotline and County Health Teams in close coordination with IMC. Ambulances are also dispatched in the counties to transport blood samples and oral swabs to laboratories for testing.

- During the reporting period, IMC supported Screening and Referral Units (SRUs) in Margibi, Montserrado, Bong and Nimba counties, screening a total of 8,822 patients for potential EVD symptoms. The organization continues to provide support to SRUs in Phebe and CB Dunbar Hospitals as the facilities transition to self-management. In Montserrado, IMC handed over the management of three SRUs to the health facilities. Four more were handed over during the week of 20 September.

Health System Restoration

- Close to 11,400 under-five children will be served by the health workers and volunteers in Grand Kru County against the three major child killer diseases (Malaria, Pneumonia and Diarrhoea) in Liberia.
- A refresher training on integrated community case management (iCCM) has been conducted by UNICEF for 15 health facilities in Grand Kru County. Training for 130 community health volunteers, also in Grand Kru County, begins on 5 October.
- The Concern IPC Team completed a six day Safe and Quality Services (SQS) Training of Trainers conducted by MENTOR Initiative in Montserrado. The Concern Team also carried out a baseline survey in 10 health facilities to better understand what IPC techniques health workers are using.

Psychosocial Support

- The Psychosocial Support (PSS) team from IMC provided support to three suspect patients in Bong ETU during the reporting period. Support included solidarity kits for recently discharged patients and stipends to cover transportation back to their homes. The PSS team also provided support to family members visiting patients in the ETU. PSS continues to be a core component of IMCs ETU package, even as the number of admitted patients continues to decrease.

Logistics

- Following a request from the Government of Liberia, WFP is setting up five additional mobile storage units (MSUs) in the counties of Lofa, Bong, Grand Gedeh, Maryland and Grand Bassa. In total, WFP has provided the MoH with 3,685 m³ additional storage capacity in all 14 counties outside Monrovia.

Education

- Following the reopening of schools in Liberia, UNICEF resumed the distribution of teaching and learning materials, reaching a total of 179 schools in Montserrado County and benefitting 53,000 students and 3,800 teachers. The distribution of these materials to schools in the remaining 14 counties will begin in the second week of October and is expected to end in December 2015.
- In support to Ministry of Education's strategy on Safe School Environment, the Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS)/IFRC committed to distribute Infection Prevention and Control kits to a total of 769 schools in 12 counties. During the reporting period the LNRCS has distributed kits to a total of 500 schools in Montserrado County. The distribution to the schools in other counties will continue during the next two weeks.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Construction of triage, isolation units and WASH facilities (incinerators, dug wells) supported by Concern is almost completed in 14 health facilities and 17 schools in Grand Bassa, Lofa and Montserrado counties.
- As part of UNICEF's support to improving access to water in communities, a total of 37 machine drilled boreholes (fitted with hand pumps), and 15 water wells have been rehabilitated or constructed in Maryland and Nimba Counties. Through these interventions, communities not only have access to improved drinking water, but also access to water for handwashing purposes (a key pre-emptive strategy for infection prevention and control).
- In River Gee ARC has completed rehabilitation of waste and placenta pits, for Infection prevention and Control, in two health facilities.

- UNDP has conducted waste management trainings for over 150 medical staff at five major hospitals around the country, on the use and maintenance of autoclaves installed at these health facilities. Hospitals that have benefitted from the training so far are; CH Rennie in Margibi, Phebe in Bong, Tellewoyan in Lofa, as well as the JFK, ELWA and Redemption hospitals in Montserrado. Eight shredders are also to be dispatched at the six health facilities in Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Maryland, Margibi and Montserrado Counties, where autoclaves have been installed. The shredders are to be used to further de-contaminate medical and non-medical wastes for proper disposal.

Child Protection

- As a part of a UNICEF-supported programme in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Ministry of Health, over 3,000 children from heavily EVD affected communities - some themselves orphans and survivors of EVD - are participating in ongoing 'recreation for resilience' activities in schools and communities in eight counties (Margibi, Montserrado, Grand Cape Mount, Bong, Bomi, Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Bassa).
- 100 Ebola survivors (a segment of the 1200 survivors hired as child protection advocates) conducted a two day UNICEF-sponsored campaign to raise awareness on prevention strategies towards stigma and discrimination which have been reported in the wake of the epidemic in Bomi and Gbarpolu Counties.

Upcoming events

- WHO is organizing a meeting on surveillance on 5 and 6 October in Monrovia, Liberia, to be attended by government representatives and operational partners. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a framework for EVD surveillance activities during phase 3 of the Ebola response, and to develop recommendations for the use of rapid diagnostic tests in the context of EVD surveillance.
- From 12 - 14 October the WHO 3-level meeting will take place in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The themes of the meeting will be operationalizing the Phase 3 framework, and health system recovery and plans for 2016 and 2017.