

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

3 November 2014

KEY POINTS

- There have been 13 567 reported cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) and 4951 deaths.
- A UN worker affected by EVD has been flown from Sierra Leone to France for treatment.
- Two people in Mali are suspected of having EVD after coming into contact with a two year old girl who died of the disease.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. UNMEER SRSG Anthony Banbury returned to the three most affected countries. He met President Alpha Condé, of Guinea who has adopted a national plan to defeat EVD, in alignment with the plan that came out of the planning conference held two weeks ago in Accra, Ghana. In Guinea, SRSG Banbury also travelled to Kissidougou where WFP is in the process of building a Forward Logistics Base (FLB) and to Guéckédou, where the EVD outbreak is believed to have started and which now has zero EVD cases. The challenge will be to replicate the strategy to defeat the disease throughout the country and the wider region. In Sierra Leone, SRSG Banbury and UNMEER Ebola Crisis Manager (ECM) Amadu Kamara met with EVD Survivors in Kenema, visited the city's Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) and the FLB run by WFP in Port Loko District. The delegation also received a briefing at the newly-opened Command and Control Centre, in charge of coordinating burials and ambulance pick-ups in the district.
2. UN Special Envoy, Dr David Nabarro, urged a sustained global fight against EVD until the last case is treated, cautioning that dropping infection rates do not guarantee any let-up. He also spoke out against imposing too strict travel restrictions on those returning from Ebola-affected countries. "Returning health workers are exceptional people giving for humanity," he said, noting that "there's no scientific basis for putting them in quarantine unless there is a suggestion that they might have Ebola".
3. UNMEER ECM for Liberia, Dr Peter Graaff, attended the inauguration ceremony of the Ministry of Defence ETU, constructed by a consortium led by WHO but also including WFP, UNICEF and USAID, and to be operated by Ministry of Health staff with technical support from doctors sent by the African Union and Cuba.
4. UNMEER Liberia participated in a Joint Forum with the Private Sector on Ebola Disease Prevention Protocols, chaired by the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The aim of the gathering was to ensure business continuity, manage risk and facilitate the restart of closed businesses. The President appealed not to miss the dry season to fast-track urgent improvements to key infrastructure (power, roads, water and ports). There was a call to relax the curfew to allow urgent repairs on the telecom network necessary for the response and to facilitate broader business continuity.
5. UNDP noted in a report that the EVD outbreak imposes serious impacts on the economies of the three affected countries. The restrictions on the movement of goods and people have threatened the food chains from production to market access and commerce. Most countries bordering Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have closed their borders. The limited supply of goods and services has started impacting on prices: the prices of oil, rice and potatoes doubled in Liberia and the price of rice was marked up by at least 30 percent in Sierra Leone. A food crisis is imminent in early 2015 and beyond in these countries.

Human Rights

6. According to a survey by UNICEF, 96 percent of Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone have experienced some sort of discrimination. More than three-quarters of respondents told UNICEF they would not welcome back an Ebola survivor into their community.

Medical

7. A total of 13 567 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of EVD have been reported in countries with widespread and intense transmission (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), countries with an initial case or localized transmission (Mali, Spain and the US) and previously affected countries (Nigeria, Senegal) up to the end of 29 October. There have been 4951 reported deaths.
8. A total of 523 health-care workers (HCWs) are known to have been infected with EVD up to the end of 29 October. A total of 269 HCWs have died.
9. Two people in Mali are suspected of having EVD after coming into contact with a two-year-old girl who died of the disease last week, according to data from the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC). She may have had contact with up to 141 people, 57 of whom have yet to be traced.
10. A UN worker suffering from EVD has been flown to France from Sierra Leone for treatment aboard a specially equipped jet and placed in isolation at the Begin military hospital in the eastern Paris suburb of Saint-Mandé.
11. WHO updated its personal protective equipment guidelines for the EVD response. Experts agreed that it was most important to have PPE that protects the mouth, nose and eyes from contaminated droplets and fluids. Given that hands are known to transmit pathogens to other parts of the body, as well as to other individuals, hand hygiene and gloves are essential, both to protect the health worker and to prevent transmission to others. Face cover, protective foot wear, gowns or cover-alls, and head cover were also considered essential to prevent transmission to healthcare workers. Although PPE is the most visible control used to prevent transmission, it is effective only if applied together with other controls including facilities for barrier nursing and work organization, water and sanitation, hand hygiene, and waste management.
12. The UK is building and staffing three new laboratories in Sierra Leone, which will speed up the time taken to diagnose the disease and help to stop its spread across the country. The Department for International Development (DFID) has pledged USD 32 million in new funding for the labs, the first of which opened beside the EVD treatment unit at Kerry Town last week. This lab alone will double testing capacity in Sierra Leone, while all three labs are expected to quadruple the number of tests that can be carried out every day. Norway has agreed to provide up to 200 health workers and vital technical equipment for the UK's Ebola Treatment Centre in Moyamba.

Logistics

13. The WFP is facing an unprecedented challenge in Guinea as it struggles to halt the spread of EVD, feed more than 350,000 people and protect the progress made in tackling chronic child malnutrition over recent years. WFP's Guinea director, Elisabeth Faure, said the scale of the epidemic was forcing the organisation to operate far beyond its core emergency mission.
14. Medical and other relief items are being stored for too long at the main logistics hub in Monrovia, Liberia. For instance, 63 container equivalents have been in store for over 17 days. A more efficient dispatch plan is needed. New fees for trucks accessing Monrovia's Roberts airport facilities have also been announced. The Liberian EVD response Incident Management System and the Logistics Cluster are enquiring about the move and are seeking an exemption for humanitarian organizations.

Resource Mobilisation

15. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements of USD 988 million has received USD 542 million, which is just under 54.9 per cent of the total ask.
16. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has USD 59.7 million in commitments. In total USD 117 million has been pledged, surpassing the target of USD 100 million by end of October 2014.
17. China boosted its aid to the most affected countries to USD 123 million. It also pledged to increase the number of medical personnel it has in the region by 200, to a total of 700.
18. All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of cash and in-kind contributions by e-mailing: fts@un.org.

Outreach and Education

19. UNICEF and its partners are actively engaged in a wide scope of prevention activities. In Cote d'Ivoire, since March, UNICEF has been working together with the Government to inform and mobilize the community, including in schools. UNICEF is also supporting a media campaign with a view to mobilizing local communities. In Mali, UNICEF is working on tailoring the right message to sensitize the population, and in particular community leaders. UNICEF is also working closely with the Ministry of Education on sensitization campaigns in schools, and providing practical training to medical personnel based on simulations, particularly in the regions of high risk.

Essential Services

20. Women are no longer giving birth in health facilities due to EVD. Contraception distributions have also dropped by 70 per cent leading to fears of a high rate of new teenage pregnancies and a doubling of severe acute malnutrition of children under five with mothers struggling to earn money for food. Indeed, new data on severe acute malnutrition admissions in Liberia for the month of September 2014 revealed that a total of 325 severely malnourished children under the age of five were admitted to UNICEF-supported integrated management of acute malnutrition treatment sites.
21. MSF has begun distributing antimalarial medicines in Monrovia, Liberia, a crucial medical intervention in a city where the basic health care system has collapsed in recent months. Malaria is endemic in Liberia but due to the incredible demand of the EVD outbreak on the medical system, basic health care such as malaria treatment is now very difficult to find in Monrovia. MSF's program will prevent new malaria cases and minimize the number of people with malaria at EVD treatment units. US philanthropist Bill Gates on Sunday announced he will donate over USD 500 million to fight malaria and other infectious diseases in the developing world, saying the EVD outbreak is a call to action.

Upcoming Events

- 31 October - 4 November - SRSB Banbury travels to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- 11 December - Global Compact CEO-level Action Pledge Event at the UN.

Attachments and resources

- USAID map – ETUs in Liberia:
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Liberia_1.pdf
- USAID map – ETUs in the region:
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Regional%20Map.pdf>
- MapAction – ETUs in Sierra Leone:
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MA009_EbolaCareFacilities_Case_A3-300dpi.pdf.pdf