

Sierra Leone raises Ebola death toll

June 2 2014

Sierra Leone raised its death toll from the highly contagious Ebola virus on Monday, sparking fears that the deadly epidemic gripping west Africa is spreading.

Health ministry spokesman Yaya Tunis said one more patient had been killed by the tropical pathogen since the government announced a [death toll](#) of four on Friday last week.

"As of now, the update is 15 confirmed cases out of 36 suspected cases documented. Out of the 15, we now have five deaths," he told reporters.

Three of the patients had been undergoing treatment at a health facility in eastern Sierra Leone while two others were among four sick patients removed from an isolation facility by [family members](#) and taken back to their home village.

The impoverished west African nation last week confirmed its first deaths from Ebola in the eastern regions of Kailahun and Kenema, near the border with Guinea, the epicentre of the outbreak.

The virus is one of the deadliest known to man, with more than 100 confirmed deaths from the disease in west Africa since January.

According to a May 30 statement by the WHO, 291 cases of suspected Ebola, of which 193 have resulted in deaths, have been reported in the Republic of Guinea.

Out of the 291 cases, WHO said that 172 were confirmed Ebola cases, 108 of them deadly.

Ebola has also been reported in neighbouring Liberia, with a total of at least 10 deaths confirmed or suspected to have been caused by Ebola.

The tropical virus can fell its victims within days, causing severe fever and muscle pain, weakness, vomiting and diarrhoea—in some cases shutting down organs and causing unstoppable bleeding.

No medicine or vaccine exists for the Ebola, which is named after a small river in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sierra Leone has restricted travel in some areas, and reaffirmed an earlier ban on trips to funerals in neighbouring Guinea in a bid to stop the spread of the disease.

"We are working hard to contain the disease and to ensure we stop the spread," Tunis said.

Deputy Labour Minister Augustine Kortu told reporters after a weekend trip to the stricken eastern area that the situation was calm, although locals were "jittery".

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