

Australia promises \$6.4 million to fight Ebola

September 17 2014

Australia announced on Wednesday it will immediately provide an additional 7 million Australian dollars (\$6.4 million) to help the international response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The country had previously committed AU\$1 million to the international response to the viral disease outbreak that has killed at least 2,400 people. The World Health Organization says the death toll from Ebola could rise to more than 20,000.

The fresh funds include AU\$2 million requested by Britain to help that country deliver medical services in Sierra Leone, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said in a statement.

Another AU\$2.5 million will go to the World Health Organization's consolidated regional response, and AU\$2.5 million will be given to Medecins Sans Frontieres, also known as Doctors Without Borders, for medical services, she said.

"Health systems in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are under severe strain, and the United Nations assesses that these countries are facing a humanitarian emergency," Bishop said.

There have been no cases of Ebola in Australia, and health authorities rate the risk of an outbreak in the island continent as low.

President Barack Obama declared Tuesday that the Ebola epidemic in West Africa could threaten security around the world.

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Citation: Australia promises \$6.4 million to fight Ebola (2014, September 17) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-australia-million-ebola.html>

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