

Ebola death toll edging to 4,900 mark: WHO

October 22 2014

The death toll in the world's worst-ever Ebola outbreak has edged closer to 4,900, while almost 10,000 people have now been infected, new figures from the World Health Organization showed Wednesday.

In its latest update, the UN health agency said as of October 19, 4,877 people had died of Ebola out of a total of 9,936 [cases](#) registered in seven countries.

The previous WHO toll, running to October 14, had shown 4,555 deaths out of 9,216 registered cases.

The WHO has repeatedly underlined that substantial increases in the number of registered deaths and cases do not mean that they have surged over the period in question.

Instead, they reflect delayed counting, given the extremely difficult conditions in the hard-hit west African nations.

Following are the latest WHO figures in the affected countries.

Worst hit countries

The WHO splits the seven affected countries into two groups, with the first comprised of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone—by far the worst hit nations.

Liberia is the worst of all, with 4,665 cases of Ebola and 2,705 deaths.

Sierra Leone's tally is 3,706 cases, of which 1,259 have been fatal.

Guinea, where the epidemic began in December, has seen 1,540 cases and 904 deaths.

Less affected countries

The second group counts countries with far fewer cases, including Senegal and Nigeria, which were declared Ebola-free by the WHO on Friday and Monday, respectively.

That declaration could be made because the benchmark of 42 days—two 21-day periods of virus incubation—had passed without any new cases.

Both Senegal and Nigeria have been praised by the WHO for their rapid fightback against Ebola.

Senegal's single, non-fatal Ebola case was in August.

Nigeria saw 20 cases, including eight deaths.

The second group now also includes Spain, where a nurse was confirmed to have caught the disease from a patient she cared for, a missionary who died from Ebola after returning from Liberia.

After receiving treatment, the nurse has twice tested negative for Ebola, with the most recent result on Tuesday, the WHO noted.

Spain will therefore be declared Ebola-free if there are no new cases over the next 42 days, it added.

The second group also counts the United States, where two nurses have fallen ill after caring for a Liberian man, Thomas Eric Duncan, who died

on October 8 after becoming the first Ebola case diagnosed in the US.

Healthcare workers

Health workers paid a heavy price for their efforts to fight the epidemic, with 244 deaths out of 443 cases across the countries.

Liberia: 222 infected, 103 dead

Sierra Leone: 129 infected, 95 dead

Guinea: 78 infected, 41 dead

Nigeria: 11 infected, five dead

United States: two infected

Spain: one infected

Separate outbreak

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, hit by a separate strain of Ebola from the one raging in west Africa, the WHO said there have been 66 cases and 49 deaths up to October 20.

Eight healthcare workers were infected and died in that outbreak.

70 percent fatality rate

It was long thought the west African outbreak was killing about one in two people infected, but the WHO says the fatality rate is actually around 70 percent based on the highest quality data and tracking patients

throughout the course of the disease.

Five Ebola species

There are five known distinct species of Ebola and the outbreak raging in west Africa stems from the Zaire species—the deadliest of the lot.

That species caused the world's first known Ebola outbreak in 1976 in Zaire, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, which until now was the deadliest on record, with 280 deaths.

The disease takes its name from the River Ebola in DR Congo.

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