

US military planes arrive at epicenter of Ebola

October 9 2014, by Jonathan Paye-Layleh



U.S marines disembark upon their arrival at the Roberts International airport in Monrovia, Liberia, Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014. Six U.S. military planes arrived Thursday at the epicenter of the Ebola crisis, carrying more aid and American Marines into Liberia, the country hardest hit by the deadly disease that has devastated West Africa and stirred anxiety across a fearful world. At a World Bank meeting in Washington, the presidents of several West African countries struggling with Ebola pleaded for help, with one calling the epidemic "a tragedy unforeseen in modern times." (AP Photo/Abbas Dulleh)

Six U.S. military planes arrived in the Ebola hot zone Thursday with more Marines, as West Africa's leaders pleaded for the world's help in dealing with a crisis that one called "a tragedy unforeseen in modern times."

"Our people are dying," Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma lamented by videoconference at a World Bank meeting in Washington. He said other countries are not responding fast enough while children are orphaned and infected doctors and nurses are lost to the disease.

Alpha Conde of Guinea said the region's countries are in "a very fragile situation."

Ebola is "an international threat and deserves an international response," he said, speaking through a translator as he sought money, medicine, equipment and training for health care workers.

Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said he was reminded of the start of the AIDS epidemic.

"We have to work now so this is not the next AIDS," Frieden said.

The fleet of planes that landed outside the Liberian capital of Monrovia consisted of four MV-22 Ospreys and two KC-130s. The 100 additional Marines bring to just over 300 the total number of American troops in the country, said Maj. Gen. Darryl A. Williams, the commander leading the U.S. response.

Williams joined the American ambassador to Liberia, Deborah Malac, at the [airport](#) to greet the aircraft.

As vehicles unloaded boxes of equipment wrapped in green-and-black cloth, the Marines formed a line on the tarmac and had their

temperatures checked by Liberian [health workers](#).

Meanwhile, British authorities said they would introduce "enhanced" screening of travelers for Ebola at Heathrow and Gatwick airports and Eurostar rail terminals.

Prime Minister David Cameron's office said passengers arriving from West Africa would be questioned about their travels and contacts. Some people could be given a medical assessment and advice on what to do if they develop symptoms.



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Also Thursday, Liberian police used batons and rattan whips to disperse 100 protesters outside the National Assembly, where lawmakers were debating granting President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf more powers beyond those contained in a state of emergency declared in August. Her handling of the crisis has been criticized as heavy handed and ineffective.

Liberian state radio announced that Senate elections scheduled for next week would be postponed. No new date was given.

The outbreak has killed more than 3,800 people, according to the latest World Health Organization figures. The vast majority of those deaths have been in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Elsewhere, University of Maryland researchers announced that the first study of a possible Ebola vaccine in Africa was underway. Scientists say three [health care workers](#) in Mali received the experimental shots developed by the U.S. government.

Mali has not had any cases of Ebola, but it borders the outbreak zone. Researchers say early safety tests should be done in Ebola-free countries to avoid complicating factors. If the vaccine appears to be safe, larger trials could be done in the outbreak zone early next year.

The U.S. military is working to build medical centers in Liberia and may send up to 4,000 soldiers to help with the Ebola crisis. Medical workers and beds for Ebola patients are sorely lacking.

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said his country would provide more than 750 troops to help build treatment centers and an Ebola

"training academy" in Sierra Leone. Army medics and helicopters will provide direct support. Britain will also contribute an aviation support ship.

British troops are expected to arrive next week in Sierra Leone, where they will join military engineers and planners who have been there for nearly a month helping to construct medical centers.

The German military, which has already been flying material such as protective clothing from Senegal to the worst-hit countries, planned to start a wider deployment of aid in mid-November. The military is expected to set up a clinic for 50 patients.



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Sierra Leone officials finally released a shipping container filled with medical gear and mattresses that had been held up at the port for more than a month.

Ibrahim Bangura, an official who handles medical supplies, said the container's contents were finally in his possession on Thursday. Bureaucracy and political infighting were blamed for delay in distributing the aid.

In Guinea, where the first Ebola cases were confirmed back in March, Doctors Without Borders warned on Thursday of a "massive" influx of cases in the capital.

The aid group's center in Conakry received 22 patients on Monday alone, including 18 from the same region 50 kilometers east of the city, the group said, adding that its facilities were reaching their limits.



A medical practitioner wearing protective clothing stands next to an isolated patient on the sixth floor of the the Carlos III hospital in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014. Two doctors who treated a Spanish nurse who contracted Ebola have been admitted to a Madrid hospital for precautionary observation, bringing to six the number being monitored at the center. More than 50 other possible contacts were being monitored. The nurse, who had cared for a Spanish priest who died of Ebola, was the first case of Ebola being transmitted outside of West Africa, where a months-long outbreak has killed at least 3,500 people and infected at least twice as many. (AP Photo)

There was continued concern about Ebola in Spain, where the first person known to have caught the disease outside the outbreak zone in West Africa became sick.

The condition of Spanish nursing assistant Teresa Romero deteriorated on Thursday, said Yolanda Fuentes, deputy director of Madrid's Carlos III hospital.



World Bank President Jim Yong Kim pauses during a news conference at International Monetary Fund headquarters in Washington, Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Four doctors, four nurses, a hospital orderly and two beauty salon workers who came into contact with Romero have been admitted to the hospital, bringing to 14 the number of people being monitored at the center, health officials said late Thursday.

In Germany, a man infected in Liberia arrived Thursday at a hospital for treatment—the third Ebola patient to be flown to the country. The St. Georg Hospital in Leipzig said the patient works for the United Nations in Liberia.

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