

Ebola returns to city at Sierra Leone outbreak epicentre

November 21 2014

Sierra Leone announced a death from Ebola on Friday in the eastern city of Kenema—the epicentre of the outbreak which had gone more than three weeks without new infections.

The case has dashed hopes that while Ebola continues to spread fast in the western area encompassing the capital Freetown, the eastern region where the crisis first emerged had beaten the virus.

"After zero cases reported for the past 26 days, the eastern town had an Ebola death involving a woman who had visited the city 10 days ago and started feeling sick," health ministry spokesman Abass Kamara told AFP.

"She was treated at the Kenema government hospital but her Ebola status was not detected and she later died. When a swab was taken, it was found out that she was Ebola positive."

The spread of the virulent tropical pathogen appears to be slowing in neighbouring Liberia, which has set itself the goal of eradicating the virus by the end of the year.

But transmission remains "intense" in Sierra Leone, according to the World Health Organization, with more than 1,200 lives lost since the first cases in the east.

Kamara said 11 nurses who treated the new case had been placed in

quarantine.

"We thought we were well on the path of getting out of the woods as far as Ebola is concerned but the news is shattering," Kenema resident Marian Kaikai told AFP.

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Citation: Ebola returns to city at Sierra Leone outbreak epicentre (2014, November 21) retrieved 4 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-ebola-city-sierra-leone-outbreak.html>

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