

# Two more suspected Ebola deaths in Mali

November 14 2014, by Serge Daniel

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Two people who died after exposure to the body of a Muslim cleric killed by Ebola in Mali were "highly suspected" of having contracted the virus, a government official said Friday.

The west African nation has been scrambling to prevent an isolated outbreak turning into a major crisis after the deaths of the Guinean imam and the Malian nurse who treated him in the capital Bamako.

A health ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that a doctor in the Pasteur clinic, where the cleric died, had also contracted the virus.

"A Malian doctor who has been in contact with the nurse who died of Ebola, is positive. He is alive, and is being closely monitored. He is in the [intensive care unit](#)," the official said.

"In addition, samples were taken from two other patients who died and are considered highly suspicious cases. We are awaiting test results."

The official said the two new fatal cases occurred in a house in Bamako where the imam had been taken after he died.

The outbreak has dashed hopes that Mali is free of Ebola and has caused alarm in Bamako, where the imam was washed by mourners at a mosque after his death.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Friday that the

outbreak—almost entirely confined to west Africa—had left 5,177 people dead from around 14,500 cases since Ebola emerged in Guinea in December.

Teams of investigators are tracing Malian health workers and scouring Bamako and the imam's home village of Kouremale, which straddles the border between Mali and Guinea, for people who could have been exposed.

The deaths have raised fears of widespread contamination as they were unrelated to Mali's only other confirmed fatality, a two-year-old girl who had also arrived from Guinea in October.

A friend who had visited the imam in the Pasteur clinic also died of probable Ebola, according to the WHO.

The 70-year-old cleric, named as Goika Sekou, fell sick at home and was transferred via several treatment centres to the Pasteur clinic.

He had travelled to Bamako by car with four family members—all of whom have since got sick or died at home in Guinea.

Traditional African funeral rites are considered one of the main causes of Ebola spreading, as it is transmitted through bodily fluids and those who have recently died are particularly infectious.

The virus is estimated to have killed around 70 percent of its victims, often shutting down their organs and causing unstoppable bleeding.

Malian information minister Mahamadou Camara told reporters in Bamako the government was limiting land border crossings from Guinea to a single entry point with strengthened health checks.

He announced the installation "within 72 hours" of an isolation centre on the Malian side of Kouremale.

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