

Ebola death toll climbs to 6,388 as S.Leone cases soar

December 10 2014

Nearly 6,400 people have now died from Ebola, the World Health Organization said Wednesday, amid a ballooning case load in Sierra Leone.

The UN health agency reported 17,942 cases of the deadly virus across eight countries as of December 7, resulting in a total of 6,388 deaths—all but 15 of them in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

On Monday, WHO had put the global death toll at 6,346 out of 17,834 cases.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone meanwhile reported 397 new cases during the week of December 7—three times as many as Liberia and Guinea combined, WHO said.

The country now counts a total of 7,897 Ebola cases, including 1,768 deaths, according to Wednesday's tally.

A full third of the new cases, or 133 of them, were reported in the capital Freetown, at the heart of the ongoing surge in cases seen in the west of the country.

Sierra Leone, which only a few days ago overtook Liberia as the nation

with the most cases of the killer virus, recorded 1,319 new cases during the three weeks prior to Sunday.

WHO said Ebola transmission remained "persistent and intense" across the whole country, except in the south, with the previously hard-hit southern district of Kenema for instance reporting just one new case since November 1.

Liberia

Liberia, long the hardest-hit country, has meanwhile seen a clear decrease in transmission over the past month.

Data as of December 3 showed the country counted 7,719 Ebola infections and 3,177 deaths, WHO said.

Twenty-nine confirmed cases were reported country-wide during the first three days of the month—more than half of them in the Montserrado district, which includes the capital Monrovia.

Liberia counted 225 new cases during the three weeks leading up to December 3, WHO said, adding that the previously hard-hit district of Lofa had reported no new cases for six consecutive weeks.

Guinea

In Guinea, where the outbreak started nearly a year ago, 2,292 Ebola cases and 1,428 deaths were recorded as of December 7, according to the tally.

Guinea registered 321 new cases country-wide in the prior three weeks—103 of them in the final week.

WHO said that while the case numbers in the country appear fairly stable, transmission has been increasing slightly, and more worryingly, expanding geographically.

The number of districts affected climbed from nine on October 1 to 14 on December 1, the UN agency said.

The virus is still spreading fast in Mecenta in the southeast, and spreading steadily in several central and northern districts, including near the Malian border.

Other countries affected

Outside of the three most affected countries, the [death toll](#) remains the same—six in Mali, one in the United States, and eight in Nigeria, which was declared Ebola free in October.

Spain and Senegal, which have both been declared free from Ebola, meanwhile counted one case each, but no deaths.

Healthcare workers

Ebola, one of the deadliest viruses known to man, is spread only through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person showing symptoms such as fever or vomiting.

People caring for the sick or handling the bodies of people infected Ebola are especially exposed.

As of December 7, a total of 639 [healthcare workers](#) were known to have contracted the virus, and 349 of them had died, WHO said

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