

Recorded Ebola deaths top 7,000

December 20 2014, by Boubacar Diallo



UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, centre, inspects the honor guard upon arrival at the Roberts international airport in Monrovia, Liberia, Friday, Dec. 19, 2014. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised health workers battling Ebola in Sierra Leone and Liberia on Friday, saying they have shown "the most noble face of humankind" amid an epidemic that has killed more than 6,900 people in West Africa. Ban, who made stops in both countries on Friday, travels Saturday to Guinea where the Ebola virus first emerged a year ago. (AP Photo/Abbas Dulleh)

The worst Ebola outbreak on record has now killed more than 7,000

people, with many of the latest deaths reported in Sierra Leone, the World Health Organization said as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon continued his tour of Ebola-affected countries in West Africa on Saturday.

The three countries hit hardest by Ebola have now recorded 7,373 deaths, up from 6,900 on Wednesday, according to WHO figures posted online late Friday. A total of 392 of the new deaths were in Sierra Leone, where Ebola is spreading the fastest.

The new totals include confirmed, probable and suspected Ebola deaths. The WHO says there have also been six Ebola deaths in Mali, eight in Nigeria and one in the United States.

The total number of cases in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia now stands at 19,031, up from 18,569.

Ban arrived in Guinea, where the outbreak's first cases were confirmed back in March, on Saturday after touring Liberia and Sierra Leone on Friday. After meeting with President Alpha Conde, he expressed concern about the situation in the country's southeast forest region, where he said the number of infected people "seems to continue to grow." The region borders Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, and Ban called for cross-border collaboration to bring the disease under control.

He urged all Guineans to commit themselves to eradicating Ebola, saying that the U.N. and its partners "are there to help you."



In this photo released by the United Nations, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, left, meets with Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Monrovia, Liberia, on Friday, Dec. 19, 2014. Ban praised health workers battling Ebola in Sierra Leone and Liberia on Friday, saying they have shown "the most noble face of humankind" amid an epidemic that has killed more than 6,900 people in West Africa. Ban, who made stops in both countries on Friday, travels Saturday to Guinea where the Ebola virus first emerged a year ago. (AP Photo/United Nations, Evan Schneider)

"It has never been so important to work together," he said.

Guinea has recorded 2,453 Ebola deaths and 1,550 cases, according to the WHO. This past week, officials in Conakry, the capital, announced a ban on New Year's Eve celebrations such as fireworks displays and beach gatherings in a bid to curtail transmission.

Ban was expected to travel to Mali Saturday evening.

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