

Liberians urged to travel last mile to beat Ebola

December 9 2014, by Jonathan Paye-Layleh

Liberia's president is urging her countrymen to travel the "very difficult last mile" to rid Ebola from the country, especially remote areas.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has set the goal of stopping Ebola transmission by the end of the year, a target that appears unrealistic but may be useful as a way to ensure people don't get complacent as [infection rates](#) stabilize. There are concerns that, as the disease retreats, lax hygiene practices will return and allow it to flare again.

On Monday, Sirleaf launched "Operation Ebola Must Go," reminding Liberians that there are still Ebola hot spots around the country, many in rural areas.

"The disease has retreated into places that are hard to reach," Sirleaf said in remarks broadcast Tuesday on state radio from the launch in the Monrovia township of New Georgia. "We all have to intensify our effort to travel that difficult, very difficult last mile."

The current Ebola outbreak has infected more than 17,800 people, the vast majority in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Of those, around 6,300 have died. There are signs the outbreak is beginning to be controlled in Liberia and Guinea, although it continues to spread quickly in Sierra Leone, which now has recorded the highest number of infections.

On Tuesday, Liberia is hosting a meeting of representatives and experts

from the affected countries and the U.N. mission on Ebola to discuss how the countries can work together to stop cross-border transmission.

Sirleaf warned people that just because Liberia has had some success in reducing transmission, especially in the capital, that does not mean the fight is over.

"I have heard someone say to go from 100 to 90 is hard," she said. "But to go from 10 to 0 is even harder."

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