

Most calls to Ebola centre are pranks: S Leone official

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Eighty percent of people phoning a toll-free Ebola help number are prank callers, the head of the Ebola Call Centre in Sierra Leone Reynold Senessie said Tuesday.

"Such prank calls are affecting the smooth operation of the centre," said Reynold Senessie while briefing Palo Conteh, head of the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC), who paid an unannounced visit to the call centre.

The good news is that "genuine calls are dwindling and response to such calls have been swift," he added.

Conteh warned that the mobile numbers of the prank callers "will be traced and legal action taken against them."

The 117 call centre is the first point of contact for anyone dealing with possible Ebola sufferers or the bodies of those who may have died of the disease which has swept through Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

More than 8,000 people have died in the epidemic.

A senior World Health Organization official said Friday that Sierra Leone now has the means to curb the outbreak.

Eight of the country's 13 districts have reported no new cases for about a week.

The southern district of Pujehun has registered no new cases in six weeks.

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