

Liberia closes Ebola centre at epicentre of outbreak

January 27 2015

Liberia's president on Monday announced the closure of an Ebola treatment facility which lay at the epicentre of the virus's worst outbreak in history, as the disease's spread has slowed in the country.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf warned Liberians that while they could not yet afford to relax, the country had made significant progress in the fight against Ebola, and thanked states who helped Monrovia combat the virus.

"Lofa, the epicentre of the virus, has had no new cases for over 70 days," she said in the speech at the national parliament.

"The Ebola Treatment Unit in Foya is closed," she said, referring to an area in the north of the country near its border with Guinea, where the virus hit Liberia for the first time.

"Today we take pride that 13 of 15... counties have not reported new cases for 21 days," she said, referring to the virus's maximum incubation period.

"Our diligent doctors and health workers supported by international partners have brought joy to us. Ebola has made 3,000 orphans who need attention. I thank all the countries who came to our rescue when we thought all was lost."

However, the Liberian leader stressed, the outbreak was not yet over.

"We know we must continue relentlessly on the practices and protocols that have brought us this far. We must make a successful transition from treatment to prevention by building our health system. But from now let's take pride and rejoice in our collective success."

Liberia, once the country worst hit by the Ebola outbreak, hopes to have no new cases by the end of next month. The [virus](#) has seen the west African nation and its neighbours Guinea and Sierra Leone register almost 9,000 deaths in a year.

"We think we can make it to zero by the end of February latest," Liberian Commerce Minister Axel Addy told reporters in Geneva. "We're quite optimistic."

According to the latest figures, the number of registered cases in Liberia is now down to just five against a peak of more than 300 a week in August and September.

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