

Ebola-hit Liberia delays school reopening

February 1 2015

Liberia's education ministry said on Sunday it had postponed by two weeks the reopening of the country's schools, which were closed six months ago to limit the spread of the Ebola virus.

Classes had been set to resume on Monday, but the ministry said in a statement parents and students needed more time to prepare for the new school year.

"Classes will start on Monday, February 16, 2015," the statement said.

Liberia is one of three west African countries hit by the deadliest Ebola outbreak on record, together with Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Schools in all three countries were closed last year over the outbreak, which has killed around 9,000 people.

The rate of new infections has slowed significantly in recent weeks, paving the way for a gradual return to normal.

In Guinea, children returned to school on January 19.

Sierra Leone has said it will restart classes in March.

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf this week cited cost as a factor hampering the resumption of classes in her country.

"The cost of opening schools, as proposed by public, private schools and

higher education institutions, is simply prohibitive," she told parliament.

The education ministry said it was working to ensure that Ebola-related "safety protocols, logistics" and "health and training requirements" were in place before classes resumed.

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