

Guinea extends Ebola emergency measures

June 7 2015

Ebola-hit Guinea has extended a health emergency declared in March until the end of June, citing the persistence of the deadly virus in the country, the presidency said on Saturday.

The decision was taken on Friday by President Alpha Conde, the statement said, after he met his counterpart from Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma.

Impoverished Guinea and its neighbours Sierra Leone and Liberia have registered more than 11,000 deaths since the epidemic flared up in December 2013.

Liberia was declared Ebola-free in May, but the [virus](#) continues to thrive in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

In August last year, Conde declared a [health emergency](#) for the whole of Guinea. Then on March 28, 2015, he decreed a "reinforced health emergency" for five provinces in the west and southwest of the West African country.

"Given the persistence of the epidemic... in parts of Guinea and Sierra Leone," Conde and Koroma decided "to extend the reinforced emergency measures in their countries until June 30, 2015", the Guinean presidency said.

No comment was available from the authorities in Sierra Leone on Saturday evening.

According to the statement, the regions of Guinea concerned were Forecariah, Coyah, Dubreka, Boke, Kindia, Boffa, Fria and Conakry city—three more than in the March decision.

The emergency measures included the temporary closure of hospitals and clinics where there have been cases of Ebola.

Anyone hiding the sick or moving bodies would be prosecuted for "endangering other people's lives".

The decision also criminalised "all those who threaten or attack" health workers or their workplaces and equipment.

Guinea is the original epicentre but the least-affected country in the current Ebola outbreak, the worst in history since the virus was first identified in 1976.

It is also in Guinea where the reaction to the fight against Ebola has been the most violent, with eight members of an outreach team killed last September by protesters who denied the existence of the virus as a "white conspiracy".

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Citation: Guinea extends Ebola emergency measures (2015, June 7) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-06-guinea-ebola-emergency.html>

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