

50 people quarantined after new Ebola death in S. Leone

September 1 2015

Fifty people have been placed in quarantine in northern Sierra Leone after the death of a middle-aged woman from the Ebola virus, medical officials said Tuesday, in a setback for the country's bid to gain Ebola-free status.

"We are conducting an epidemiological investigation to trace the extent of the transmission" as the woman who died was sick for 5-10 days without the authorities being alerted, Ibrahim Sesay of the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) told a local radio station.

Given the 50 people identified as at high-risk "we should not be surprised if we see new cases coming out," from the new case

identified in the village of Sella Kafta in the northern district of Kambia, he said.

"Ebola is like the main actor in an horror film. Defeat the actor and he is likely to get up again," Sesay added.

There had been celebratory scenes last week when the country's last known Ebola patient was released from hospital in the central city of Makeni after being cured of the virus, raising hopes the west African nation may finally have beaten the devastating epidemic.

The latest victim had not travelled to either Liberia or Guinea, two other countries also blindsided by the worst outbreak of Ebola in history,

which has killed some 11,300 people since first emerging in December 2013 in Guinea.

News of the new Ebola death came as a new school year got underway Monday, with measures in place to try prevent the spread of the virus.

Children's temperatures were being checked at many schools, and students were directed towards buckets of chlorine to wash their hands.

Schools were closed for more than eight months at the height of the Ebola outbreak.

Reports from Kambia said community leaders and residents remained "in a state of shock" over the news.

An elder and long time resident in Sella Kafta, Sampha Mansaray told AFP by phone that "the community is in mourning over the death."

"We have been thorough in observing all restrictions to keep Ebola out of our community but we have now failed the rest of the country by being the place that has halted the countdown" towards Ebola-free status, the 60-year-old farmer lamented.

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Citation: 50 people quarantine after new Ebola death in S. Leone (2015, September 1) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

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