

Guinea begins countdown to end of Ebola after nearly two years

November 17 2015, by Boubacar Diallo

Authorities have started the countdown to the end of Ebola in Guinea, the last country still reporting cases after nearly two years and more than 11,000 deaths worldwide, health officials said Tuesday.

The patient's recovery and the lack of new cases raise hopes that Guinea—and the world—could end Ebola transmission before the end of the year. Guinea must still go 42 days without any new cases and after that must maintain a period of heightened surveillance.

Health officials performed a second test Monday on a baby whose mother had died in October from Ebola.

"The baby is negative and so Guinea today is without a single Ebola patient," said Fode Tass Sylla, spokesman for Guinea's national Ebola response taskforce. "We are crossing our fingers and praying that nothing will happen over the next 42 days so that we can celebrate Guinea without Ebola."

The World Health Organization declares that Ebola disease transmission has ended when the country goes through two incubation periods—21 days each—without a new case emerging.

The other two countries hardest hit by the virus—Sierra Leone and Liberia—already have reached that benchmark. But authorities in Guinea said they continued to face resistance in fearful communities, where people initially blamed international health workers for bringing

the virus to their region.

Many preferred to bring their sick to [traditional healers](#) instead of Ebola clinics and often buried the dead without conforming to the health rules that were designed to prevent mourners from being infected by corpses.

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Citation: Guinea begins countdown to end of Ebola after nearly two years (2015, November 17)
retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-guinea-countdown-ebola-years.html>

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