

Probable Ebola case in Sierra Leone reflects ongoing risk: WHO

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A new probable case of Ebola in Sierra Leone highlights the continued risk in west Africa, the World Health Organization said Friday, a day after the end of the deadliest outbreak in history was announced.

"A new probable case of Ebola virus disease is under investigation in Sierra Leone, reflecting the ongoing risk of new cases," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told AFP in an email.

"The Sierra Leone government acted rapidly to detect and respond to this new suspect case, which has yet to be confirmed," he said.

A Sierra Leone health ministry official had told AFP Thursday that a female student was believed to have died from the virus.

That announcement came just hours after WHO announced that all transmission of the virus that has killed more than 11,000 people in west Africa had halted after Liberia was given the all-clear.

Sierra Leone was declared free of the virus on November 7.

But WHO also said Thursday that the danger was not over, especially since the virus has been shown to persist in the body fluids of some survivors for up to a year after their recovery.

"We are now at a critical period in the Ebola epidemic as we move from managing cases and patients to managing the residual risk of new

infections," WHO's Ebola response chief, Bruce Aylward said in Thursday's statement.

"The risk of re-introduction of infection is diminishing as the virus gradually clears from the survivor population, but we still anticipate more flare-ups and must be prepared for them."

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