

Latest SLeone Ebola case cured but more testing needed—officials

February 9 2016

Sierra Leone's most recent case of Ebola has been cured, but more testing is required before the latest outbreak can be seen as resolved, health authorities said Tuesday.

"The last known Ebola patient in Sierra Leone, 38-year-old Memunatu Kalokoh, has been discharged from the 34 Military Hospital in the capital after two rigorous tests proved negative," Ministry of Health Director of Disease Prevention and Control Dr Foday Dafai told AFP.

Dafai added that Memunatu, discharged last Friday, was back in her central northern home district of Tonkolili.

Health ministry spokesman Sidi Yahya Tunis told state radio her discharge "means that Sierra Leone has again started the 42-day countdown" period towards what it hopes will be a renewed all-clear from the World Health Organization.

Memunatu was the primary carer of 22-year-old Marie Jalloh, who died of the disease on January 12 in the northern city of Magburaka, eight days before the former was diagnosed.

After visiting Memunatu just after she was diagnosed Dafai told reporters that 121 contacts had been identified as having been exposed, a third of them classed as high risk.

Stressing the importance of locating and isolating anyone who may have

had contact with Memunatu, Dafai said at the time a vaccination programme for known contacts was progressing satisfactorily, while urging other potential contacts to come forward.

On Tuesday, Dafai said: "As I speak to you, everything is quiet on the Ebola front around the country."

Despite his optimism, however, [health](#) officials told AFP that only ten of 48 potential exposed contacts around the northern city of Kambia near the Guinean border have been traced to date.

Eighteen are thought to be [high risk](#) and officials urged them to report for precautionary testing.

They added that four contacts who were residing in the same quarantine zone as Memunatu when she became ill will remain under observation until Thursday, 21 days after their last possible exposure.

Sierra Leone was declared free of Ebola transmission on November 7 last year and Guinea on December 29 while Liberia followed on January 14—but only after the virus killed 11,315 people, according to WHO estimates, triggering a global health alert.

The WHO has been warning of the possibility of a recurrence and stressing the importance of a quick, effective response to potential new cases

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