

At least 5 dead in Guinea Ebola flare-up: health officials

March 22 2016

Ebola has likely killed five people in Guinea after re-emerging in the country's south, health authorities said Tuesday, as Liberia announced it was closing their shared border to guard against the spread of the virus.

"Since the re-emergence of the disease, we have recorded five deaths, three probable and two confirmed," said Fode Tass Sylla, spokesman for Guinea's Ebola response unit.

Hours later, Liberia's information minister said its northern border with Guinea was closed "as a precautionary measure due to the new outbreak of Ebola," with all the new cases recorded close to Liberian territory.

Guinea was declared free of Ebola transmission at the end of last year, though a significant number of deaths are believed to have gone unreported and "flare-ups" relating to the persistence of the virus in survivors' bodies pose ongoing challenges.

The three probable deaths were people who were buried before they could be tested, Sylla said, adding that 961 people may have come into contact with the victims and would now undergo monitoring.

Ebola was suspected in the case of a married couple who died in the rural southern village of Koropara, the wife in late February and the husband in early March, authorities had said last week.

This was followed by the deaths of a second wife of the same man and

an eight-year-old girl, thought to be his daughter. The youngster died at an Ebola treatment centre after [health officials](#) were alerted to the presence of the disease.

In addition, a man who tested positive for Ebola in the city of Nzerekore died on Monday, Sylla said.

The Alliance For International Medical Action, which reopened its Ebola clinic in southern Guinea on Friday to treat the eight-year-old, told AFP it is still caring for her mother—believed to be the Koropara man's third wife—who has also tested positive for the virus.

On Thursday the World Health Organization (WHO) was already warning that a recurrence of Ebola—which has claimed 11,300 lives since December 2013—remained a possibility in the three worst affected countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

An investigation into the hundreds of people who may have acquired the disease from contact with Ebola victims was under way, Sylla added, focusing on "who came to (victims') burials, who paid them visits, who washed the bodies."

The WHO said Friday that Guinean health officials had alerted it to Ebola symptoms in the family's village on March 16, the same day it declared a similar flare-up over in Sierra Leone.

The village is in the same region where the first Ebola case of the current outbreak was registered in December 2013.

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