



# IOM Sierra Leone Ebola Response

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On Tuesday, 18 August 2015, IOM together with partner World Hope International co-hosted a one day conference at the University of Makeni in Bombali on Cultural Burial Liaisons. It is hoped that the innovative concept will be rolled out to neighbouring Tonkolili, Kambia and Port Loko districts. Over 200 attendees including paramount chiefs and their representatives (see inset) as well as 65 CBLs, the SLP, local NGOs, media and high level delegates from donor USAID-OFDA took part.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

- For the first time since the beginning of the outbreak, a full epidemiological week has passed with **no confirmed cases reported**. Almost 600 contacts in Tonkolili completed the 21-day follow-up period on 14 August. However, there is still a significant risk of further transmission as several high-risk contacts have been lost to follow-up in Freetown. Rapid-response teams remain alert and ready to respond to further cases.
- A total of 72 contacts remain under follow-up across Tonkolili, Western Area Urban, and Western Area Rural, all of whom are associated with the Freetown chain of transmission. All contacts associated with the recent cluster of cases in Tonkolili will complete their 21-day follow-up period on 23 August. Contacts in Freetown will remain under follow-up until 29 August.
- The last EVD patient in Sierra Leone from Tonkolili district is scheduled to be discharged from the Mateneh IMC Treatment Centre on Monday, 24 August 2015. This represents a key milestone in the countdown from Zero to 42 days. 25 August will be counted as Day 1. Barring any new cases Sierra Leone will reach 42 days on 7 October 2015. His Excellency, President Koroma will travel to Mateneh on Monday to personally discharge the last patient.
- On 21 August, senior ministers from the Government of Sierra Leone and UN officials joined hundreds of women in a beachfront, candlelit protest in Freetown following the brutal murder of a 17-year-old girl. This incident highlights a rise in violent crime during the Ebola outbreak.

## Weekly Highlights

- IOM clinicians in collaboration with the Ebola Response Consortium are providing Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training support at Connaught, Princess Christian's Maternity and Ola During Children's Hospitals and have now trained 644 hospital personnel.
- IOM and World Hope International held a one day conference on Cultural Burial Liaisons at the University of Makeni on 18 August with the participation of NERC, OFDA, WHO, District Coordinators from Kambia, Bombali, Port Loko and the Chief of Staff from Tonkolili.
- IOM hosted an inter-agency cooperation workshop at the Lungi Airport Hotel on 18 August 2015 together with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's border health team (CDC) in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Airport Authority's Public Relations Office.
- IOM mobile teams concluded three separate trainings across Bombali district for 108 participants coming from community task forces, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the Sierra Leone Police, DHMT health screeners, the motorcycle drivers' union and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation.

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Updates from the field: IOM’s Health and Humanitarian Border Management

PORT LOKO

IOM hosted an inter-agency cooperation workshop at the Lungi Airport Hotel on 18 August 2015 together with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s border health team (CDC) in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Airport Authority’s Public Relations Office. The theme of the workshop was **Constructive Engagement at a Post-Ebola Freetown National Airport**. Participants included operational managers from airport agencies. The main focus was to bring key stakeholders to the realization of the importance of a coordinated and collaborative approach in case of all potential and future public health emergencies. Two table top exercises were conducted and the participants were able to identify gaps in the current operational structure. Managers called upon IOM to offer further technical support to enhance capacity in this regard. One of the participants noted that, *“proper planning prevents poor performance”*.

Basic IPC training continues to be delivered at Port Loko Vehicle Checkpoints (VCPs). Participants include both volunteer health screeners and members of RSLAF and SLP stationed at the checkpoints. Training is delivered by one senior monitor who underwent a Training of Trainers course at the IOM Training Academy.

The IOM Lungi sub-office has commenced rapid assessments and headcounts at strategically identified wharfs in Loko Masama and Kaffu Bullom chiefdoms to amplify health screening support. Discussions are also underway with the District Ebola Response Centre (DERC) to rationalize the current number of VCPs with a look to enhance operations at those VCPs which are the most strategically located on a 24 hour basis. Four VCPs have been identified and IOM is currently developing a deployment plan in collaboration with the DHMT.

FREETOWN

On 17 August, HHBM staff at Port Loko Wharf, Susan’s Bay demonstrated their knowledge of the RING concept when a female traveler aged 40, travelling to Port Loko District had a temperature above 38 degrees after being checked

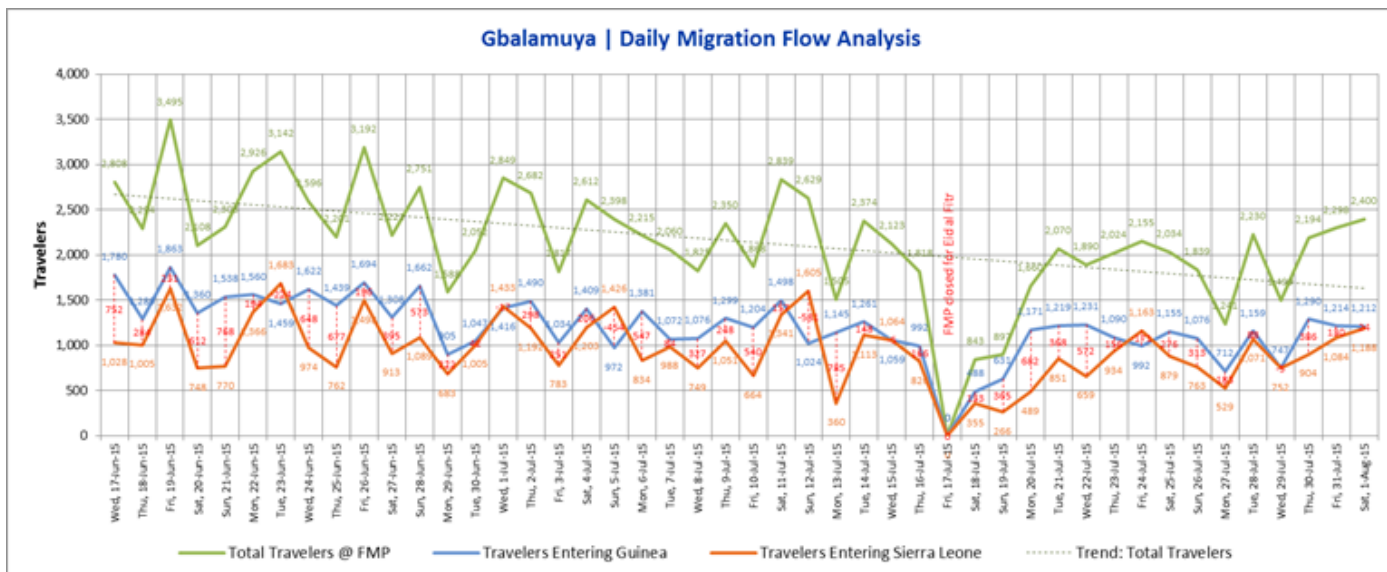
three times by IOM screeners/monitors. IOM isolated the passenger and alerted the Sierra Leone Red Cross medical team, the Sierra Leone Maritime Agency, and police and community leaders. With the support of IOM, the Red Cross medical team conducted secondary screening and was the traveler was later declared fit to travel.

KAMBIA

On 19 August 2015, Erin Downey, Field Officer with USAID-OFDA visited the IOM Kambia sub-office and project locations in Gbileh Dixon and Mambolo Chiefdoms. She was accompanied by IOM Emergency Coordinator Jonathan Baker and the HHBM Project Manager Ben Potter. While at the sub-office, she was briefed on HHBM and Care Kits operations and was given a brief tour at category A & B border crossing points and the care kits prepositioning and refresher training in Mambolo community. USAID-OFDA is the principal donor for both the HHBM and the Interim Emergency Care Kits projects.

BOMBALI

In a bid to strengthen border health screening and management, IOM mobile training teams have concluded three separate sessions across Bombali district for 108 participants coming from community task forces, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the Sierra Leone Police, DHMT health screeners, the motorcycle drivers’ union and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The trainings began with a 3-day Infection Prevention and Control and swab collecting course for 20 burial team members in Makeni from 13-15 August. In Sanya, near the border with Guinea, a 2-day IPC course for health screeners and monitors was held for 32 participants. A final 2-day IPC mobile training session for health screeners and monitors was held for 56 participants in Kamakwie at the IOM sub-office in the UNIDO compound. One of the health screeners working at the Kainanday VCP on the outskirts of Kamakwie said, *“I have been a screener in the response for a year now, but this training helps to put our work in perspective and gives us the tools to work more safely and effectively.”*



Daily headcount information from Gbalamuya international border crossing point on the Kambia-Guinea border from 17 July to 1 August 2015.

**IOM & WHI Cultural Burial Liaisons Conference resounding success with over 200 in audience**

In order to share lessons learned from the Cultural Burial Liaison intervention in Bombali a one day conference was held on 18 August 2015 at the University of Makeni. High level delegates included the District Coordinators from Kambia, Bombali, and Port Loko, the Chief of Staff from Tonkolili, paramount chiefs and their representatives from all 13 chiefdoms in Bombali, local Member of Parliament Thomas Turay, the National Burial Pillar Lead Dr Ansumana Sillah, the Director of the NERC Situation Room OB Sisay, representatives from project donor USAID-OFDA, World Hope International Project Coordinator Bernadette Udo and the IOM Emergency Coordinator Jon Baker.



**IOM staff greet conference attendees at the entrance to the UNIMAK auditorium on 18 August 2015.**

The conference began with a welcome address from host paramount chief Bai Shebora Kasanga II and an opening address from Senior District Officer and chairperson Mohammed Sheku Kargbo.

This was followed by introductory statements from the high level delegates. Erin Downey, USAID-OFDA Field Officer said that she was “inspired by the dedication of Sierra Leoneans to move past Ebola” and that “learning

from collective experiences was invaluable.” Dr Sillah, from the National Burial Pillar noted that “since the beginning of the CBL initiative not a single team member had gotten ill or died.” OB Sisay asked for a moment of silence for the victims of Ebola before expressing ecstatically that 144 days had passed since the last case of Ebola in Bombali

li district.

IOM’s Jon Baker said he was honored and humbled by the groundbreaking work of the CBLs and that it was this “vital linkage between communities and medical workers that ensured the success of this intervention.” He went on to say that the CBLs “demonstrated the solidarity of communities to

ending the outbreak and were a true testament to the importance of social mobilization.”

Port Loko District Coordinator, the Hon. Raymond Kabia, said that “these new structures need to be maintained and rolled out nationally to act as a lasting legacy for Ebola.” He hoped the programme could be launched in the 2600 villages of Port Loko district in recognition of the importance of traditional religious observations and Sierra Leone’s innate nature as a “nation of cultural societies.”

**Cumulative Training Academy/Mobile Training operational data for 01 December 2014– 22 August 2015  
(weekly numbers in brackets)**

Course Name	Number of courses run	Total number of National students	Total number of International Students	Cumulative Total
3 day Ebola clinician IPC 2 day Simulated Patient care	23	589	355	944
IPC support to Gov’t hospitals	29 (5)	644 (109)	0	644
1 day Ebola clinical IPC 2 day Simulated patient care	4	26	59	85
1 day clinical augmentation/ 1 day clinical pilot/RING IPC	4	25/65	41/33	164
3 day basic IPC/PPE/3 day WHO Ebola basic IPC	67	5,863	51	5,914
Mobile Training 3 day IPC/PPE/Clinical Decontamination/2 day modified IPC	39 (3)	1,443 (108)	0	1,443
3 day clinical frontline IPC (COMAHS)	2	20	4	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>168 (8)</b>	<b>8,458 (217)</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>9,218</b>

**Cont'd from page 3– CBL conference a major success**

IOM and World Hope International (WHI) and partners, will continue to work with the Social Mobilization and Burial Pillars in Bombali and other districts to take the CBL intervention forward with the eventual intention of turning CBLs into district burial teams and making the programme financially self sustaining by adding a livelihoods component to the training for CBLs.

Unsafe burials have been a significant barrier to disease prevention and control across Sierra Leone. In Bombali, 130 Liaisons across 13 chiefdoms that reflect geographical and cultural differences were recruited

in March 2015 with training beginning in April through community engagement meetings with local traditional and religious leaders. The Liaisons are tasked with ensuring community deaths are reported to the DERC and that community members comply with safe, dignified medical burial practices as mandated by the Government of Sierra Leone. The Liaisons use messaging and intervene by calling in death alerts, reassuring family members with deceased

loved ones until the burial team arrives, and assisting in culturally sensitive burial rites with the burial team.

WHI's Bernadette Udo who received raucous applause from the CBLs for her work on the intervention emphasized that social mobilization was "the eyes and ears of the community and until recently had been an underestimated aspect of the response."

She noted that the "importance of traditional burial rites had caused people to perform them in secret which had fueled the spread of Ebola but overall culture and tradition created positive impacts on communities and could not be overlooked."

During the after-

noon session presentations were given on the rationale of engaging secret societies in the Ebola response; a keynote address by MP Thomas Turay; roles, responsibilities and achievements of CBLs; and recommendations for replication and scale up. A traditional dance group provided entertainment during the lunch break. To conclude a plenary discussion was held during which questions were fielded from the audience and answers given by the delegates.



**IOM Bombali social mobilization and care kits field monitors together with staff from the IOM head office in Freetown outside the conference venue at UNIMAK on 18 August 2015.**

### **BEST of the WEB** (click links for story):

[Ebola isn't over yet, NY Times, 17 August](#)

[Sierra Leone down to last chain of Ebola virus transmission, WHO, 17 August](#)

[As Ebola crisis ebbs in Sierra Leone, food security gnaws at recovery, CS Monitor, 16 August](#)

[Ebola in Sierra Leone: after 4,000 deaths, outbreak all but over, Guardian, 20 August](#)

[Ebola's lessons, Foreign Affairs, September/October Issue](#)

[Guinea's growth of small businesses signal post-Ebola recovery, Bloomberg, 20 August](#)

[Teen's killing highlights crime wave in Ebola-hit Sierra Leone, Reuters, 21 August](#)

[Sierra Leone gold and diamond exports plummet due to Ebola, NDTV, 23 August](#)

### **IOM Sierra Leone's initiatives are supported by:**



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