



IOM Sierra Leone Ebola Response

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IOM Sierra Leone staff with delegates from IOM Guinea in Suzan's Bay community near Guinea Wharf, Freetown on 25 July 2015. IOM Guinea's three day visit to Sierra Leone was centered around field visits to Health and Humanitarian Border Management areas of operation – Freetown seaports, Port Loko and Kambia districts with the objective of standardizing implementation strategies.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- A total of 4 confirmed cases were reported from Freetown (2) and Port Loko (2) in the week to 19 July. **A new EVD confirmed case has been reported in Tonkolili after 150 days with no cases as of 23 July.**
- The first case from Freetown is a health worker who tested positive for EVD after the onset of symptoms in a voluntary quarantine facility. The second case was found with advanced symptoms outside a community health facility near the Magazine Wharf community, which reported 8 cases last week. However, the case is not a registered contact of any case from the Magazine Wharf chain of transmission. Investigations are underway to determine the source of infection and any contacts of the case. Contact tracing is complicated by the fact that the case has no fixed address and was symptomatic for an unknown period prior to identification.
- Two cases were reported from the chiefdom of Marampa in Port Loko. Both are registered contacts associated with a transmission chain linked to an EVD-positive mother who died during childbirth in mid-June.
- Three of the 4 cases reported from Sierra Leone in the week to 19 July were registered contacts. No cases were identified as a result of post-mortem testing of community deaths.
- On 19 July, a total of 618 contacts were being monitored in 4 districts: Kambia, Port Loko, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban.
- Laboratory indicators continue to reflect a heightened degree of vigilance, with 1502 new samples tested in the 6 days to 19 July.

Weekly Highlights

- From 24-26 July, a delegation from IOM Guinea visited Sierra Leone on a fact finding mission to share and harmonize cross-border interventions.
- IOM is sustaining its Magazine Wharf outbreak response support to 8 Peripheral Health Units.
- IOM clinicians continue Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training support at Connaught, Princess Christian's Maternity and Ola During Children's Hospitals in collaboration with the Ebola Response Consortium in Freetown.
- 23-24 July- IOM's Health and Humanitarian Border Management (HHBM) Project Manager Ben Potter traveled to Bombali on an evaluation mission.
- Three 2-day IPC/health screening trainings for over 100 Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) personnel stationed at category B and C (semi-manned and informal) border crossing points in Gbileh Dixon, Samu and Bramaia chiefdoms in Kambia are running until 28 July 2015.

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IOM Guinea delegation in Sierra Leone on HHBM fact finding mission; visits Suzan’s Bay

On 24 July the IOM Sierra Leone team was proud to welcome colleagues from IOM Guinea on a fact finding mission. The purpose of the visit was to share information and develop a standardized approach to Health and Humanitarian Border Management (HHBM) as well as other areas of intervention. Both missions have sizeable HHBM programmes involving 100s of staff spread across large geographic areas yet similar challenges are present on both sides of the border.

The IOM teams met in Kambia before heading to Freetown for a debriefing regarding ongoing projects and best practices on 25 July.

A tour was arranged to HHBM operations in Suzan’s Bay at both the Guinea and Port Loko Wharfs followed by a visit to the Suzan’s Bay Community Health Center, one of 8 PHUs in the Magazine Wharf area where IOM trainers together with staff from Concern Worldwide, GOAL and Save the Children have been engaged in mentoring activities in support of local health care workers for the past 5 weeks.

On 26 July, the IOM Guinea delegation was escorted through HHBM operations at Vehicle Checkpoints throughout Port Loko and Kambia districts before stopping into the

Kambia sub-office for a briefing on the recent deployment of 21 IOM monitors and 80 Passenger Welfare Organization staff to category B and C border crossing points in roving motorbike teams.



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IOM Sierra Leone and IOM Guinea at the IOM office in Freetown on 25 July 2015. IOM Guinea was accompanied by Dr Pepe Bilivogui, National Director of Public Hygiene from the Guinean Ministry of Health (1st row far left).



IOM HHBM monitors at Guinea Wharf in Suzan’s Bay. Monitors work in incredibly challenging conditions (see inset) in order to ensure data is collected on incoming passengers and health screening measures are enforced.

IOM Sierra Leone staff provide details about the Infection Prevention and Control mentoring and restock intervention in support of RING IPC and in partnership with ERC to delegates from IOM Guinea at Suzan’s Bay Community Health Center on 25 July 2015. The center serves a population of 10-20,000 and sees mostly female patients.



IOM HHBM project manager makes field visit to Bombali, Kamakwie sub-office

IOM's Health and Humanitarian Border Management (HHBM) Project Manager Ben Potter, traveled to Bombali on 23 July for an inspection tour of operations beginning at Kainanday Vehicle Checkpoint (VCP). Two mobile tablets are active and daily headcounts, point of origin/destination, reason for travel, length of stay plus health related questions are being captured and recorded. Kainanday is a critical juncture on the road to Makeni and captures those travelers who manage to avoid the inter-district ferry crossing points to the east and west of Kamakwie.

At the Kamakwie sub-office weekly average headcounts being recorded at Sanya

(category A international crossing with Guinea 590 per week), Tomparay (VCP at crossroads with Kambia's Bramaia chiefdom, Tamabaka chiefdom capital Samaya town and the road north to Sanya; weekly average 549) and Kainanday (weekly average 1075) were reviewed. It was noted that many people are traveling at night to avoid paying duty on imported items at the international border cross-

ing and a request has been made to have an IOM night shift added at Sanya.

From the sub-office, Ben met with IOM, RSLAF, SLP and DERC/DHMT staff at the Tomparay VCP. The VCP was re-established on 7 June 2015 after a directive that had seen VCPs dismantled in January was lifted.



HHBM Project Manager addresses IOM monitors at Tomparay VCP in Bombali on 23 July 2015.

In the past week two major health incidents have occurred at Tomparay. On 22 July a 2 year old girl arrived from Kufu village in Bramaia, Kambia district, with a high fever. After over-nighting at Tomparay she died on the morning of 23 July, a swab was taken for testing and the corpse was collected by the Samaya burial team. A second couple arrived with a sick child from Tambe village in Kam-

bia. Results for both cases are pending. IOM monitors have noted that the PHU in Samaya (Bombali) is closer than treatment facilities in parts of Kambia and therefore a pull factor for population movement.

IOM staff and partners are responding on the ground and remaining vigilant despite challenging conditions.

Caroline Damba, IOM HHBM monitor- "Working for a stronger Sierra Leone"

Caroline Damba, 26, IOM health screening monitor in Bombali has been working with local communities for several years. As the communications focal person with the Attitude and Behavioral Change Secretariat (ABC Secretariat) in Makeni, she was heavily involved in sensitizing local community members on a wide range of pertinent issues from health and hygiene to law and order.

The Ebola epidemic has only reinforced Caroline's determination to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable Sierra Leoneans. From November 2014, during the peak of the outbreak, Caroline began working on a 15-person District Ebola Response Center (DERC) monitoring team. As Bombali was one of the districts with the highest transmission rates in the country, Caroline's team was responsible for making daily visits to Ebola treatment facilities, holding centers and Community Care Centers to report on constraints and challenges.

Caroline is very passionate about field work and sees it as a learning experience that has opened her mind to new cultures and relationships. "IOM is all about aiding vulnerable communities. We are making sure Bombali stays safe by monitoring travelers on the road."

As an IOM monitor since early July, she and her 6 teammates have been welcomed by the local community in

Tomparay, Tambaka chiefdom where IOM manages a Vehicle Checkpoint (VCP) as a part of its wider Health and Humanitarian Border Management (HHBM) intervention in Bombali. With the Bombali sub-office located at Kamakwie, IOM staff are deployed at the international border crossing with Guinea at Sanya, Kainaday VCP south of Kamakwie and 2 ferry ports to the west and east of the town together with members from the DERC District Health Management Team, RSLAF troops and Sierra Leone Police every day from 0700-1900.

Tomparay sits at a major transit route linking Kambia's Bramaia chiefdom, Tamabaka chiefdom capital Samaya town and the road north to Sanya and Guinea. The VCP is currently seeing a weekly average of 549 travelers but this number remains low due to the curfew in Kambia which has shuttered markets until Ebola can be brought under control. In the past week two major health incidents were reported at Tomparay, largely a consequence of the clinic in Samaya town- the nearest in the area- where Kambia residents go to seek medical care.

Caroline is firm when she says, "I am working with IOM to come to the aid of Sierra Leoneans. We need to help one another to overcome Ebola and move our country forward."



Ongoing transmission in Freetown, new case in Tonkolili demonstrates importance of SocMob

IOM's 32 community social mobilizers will continue house to house sensitization activities in the wake of ongoing transmission in Freetown under Operation Safe Guard Western Area Phase II which aims to strengthen health screening at wharfs to prevent or limit inter-district travel along the coast. The Social Mobilization Pillar will also implement the Ward 69 Strategy in order to revitalize social mobilization activities in the most vulnerable wards. The activities will be divided into three areas; silent wards; current and post-transmission wards. In Magazine Wharf and Mabella communities mobilizers are carrying out surveillance and contact tracing in partnership with UNICEF, the Social Mobilization Action Committee, the Sierra Leone Red Cross, the military and District Health Management Teams (DHMT).

One of the pivotal reasons why getting to zero has proven difficult is communities' negative associations with the 117 hotline and ambulance interventions. Common perceptions among community members include a fear of being sprayed with chlorine and of being infected with Ebola while in an ambulance and of having loved ones taken

away with no explanation as to their whereabouts.

In an effort to overcome these negative perceptions, the Social Mobilization Pillar and DHMT held an ambulance exhibition at Magazine Wharf with the intention of building confidence about the safety of ambulances, dispelling misinformation and reinforcing the importance of timely reporting of disease symptoms to 117. The exhibition will be held in a number of communities in Western Area.

Ongoing Transmission

A new positive EVD case has been confirmed by post-mortem swab in Tonkolili district after 150 days without any cases. According to initial findings, a 27 year old male resident of Freetown, fell sick on 19 July and was taken to Lionheart Hospital in Yelle

before returning to his village. He returned to Masanga Hospital on 21 July for further treatment but died on 23 July. One high risk contact of the deceased has already been admitted to the International Medical Corps ETU in the area and the deceased's village of Messessebe along with Lionheart and Masanga Hospitals will be quarantined. Presently 49 contacts have been line listed. Freetown continues to report new confirmed cases and high profile escapes from under resourced treatment facilities.



IOM Social Mobilization Project Manager Katrina Hann speaking with her team at Suzan's Bay on 25 July 2015.

BEST of the WEB (click links for story):

[Ebola cases ebb, with Conakry, Freetown as hot spots, CIDRAP, 22 July](#)

[WHO reports no new cases in Liberia, UN News Center, 22 July](#)

[Sierra Leone athletes try to regain stride after Ebola, Voice of America, 24 July](#)

[UNMEER prepares for Sierra Leone drawdown: Freetown reacts, Ebola Deeply, 22 July](#)

[Surviving and soccer in Sierra Leone, New York Times Insider, 23 July](#)

[Sierra Leone starts convalescent plasma to Ebola patients, Awoko, 23 July](#)

[Why I went to fight Ebola... three times, Red Cross blog, 24 July](#)

[From New York to the Ebola frontlines, Awareness Times, 24 July](#)

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