

5 **INTERNATIONAL OUTBREAKS OF IMPORTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVELLERS AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak: update

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The outbreak continues in the three affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). New cases have been reported in all these countries in the past week.

1. Countries with widespread and intense transmission

As at 22 March 2015, a cumulative total of 24 872 EVD cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected) including 10 311 deaths (case fatality rate of 41%) has been reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. A summary of case numbers and deaths reported is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Ebola virus disease cases and deaths in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone as at 15 March 2015

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	Case fatality rate	Number of cases among healthcare workers (number of deaths)
Guinea	3 429	2 263	66%	179 (93)
Liberia	9 602	4 301	45%	372 (180)
Sierra Leone	11 841	3 747	32%	302 (221)
Total	24 872	10 311	41%	853 (494)

Source: World Health Organization Global Alert and Response: Ebola situation report of 25 March 2015 (www.who.int)

2. Countries with an initial case or cases, or with localised transmission

To date six countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, United States of America, Mali and United Kingdom) have reported localised transmission or imported a case or cases from Guinea/Liberia/Sierra Leone. Nonetheless the EVD outbreaks in these countries have been declared over.

Situation in South Africa

As at 24 March 2015 there have been no EVD cases in South Africa associated with the current outbreaks in West Africa. In addition, there are no suspected cases of EVD in South Africa at present. However, healthcare workers must maintain vigilance for cases of all viral haemorrhagic fevers including imported cases of EVD. The risk of Ebola being introduced into South Africa remains low but

a high index of suspicion is necessary given ongoing EVD transmission in West Africa. Testing for viral haemorrhagic fever viruses (including Ebola virus) in South Africa is only available at the NICD. EVD testing is neither warranted nor useful for persons that are not suffering from a clinical illness compatible with EVD, even in the event of compatible travel histories. The tests cannot be used to determine if the patient has been exposed to the virus and may develop the disease later.

Requests for testing (with a detailed clinical, travel and exposure history) should be directed to the NICD Hotline at 082 883 9920 (a 24-hour service, for healthcare professionals only).

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS