

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

a **Ebola**

Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak: situation update

All three affected countries with widespread and intense transmission (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) continue to report new cases and deaths. Furthermore, healthcare worker infections and imported EVD cases continue to be reported. The latest imported EVD case was confirmed on 29 December 2014 in Glasgow, Scotland. This is the first EVD case to be reported in the United Kingdom (UK) since the current EVD outbreak began in West

Africa during December 2013. The case-patient is a healthcare worker who returned from volunteering at an Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone.

1. Countries with widespread and intense transmission

As at 20 January 2015, a cumulative total of 21 797 EVD cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected) including 8 675 deaths with a case fatality rate of 40% have been reported in the current EVD outbreak 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 Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone as at 20 January 2015

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	Case fatality rate	Number of cases among healthcare workers (number of deaths)*
Guinea	2 873	1 880	65%	162 (100)
Liberia	8 524	3 636	43%	370 (178)
Sierra Leone	10 400	3 159	30%	296 (221)
Totals	21 261	8 414	40%	828 (499)

* data as at 18 January 2015

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

To date six countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, United States of America (USA), Mali and UK) have reported localised transmission or an imported case or cases from Guinea/Liberia/Sierra Leone. The EVD outbreaks in Senegal, Nigeria, Spain, USA and Mali have been declared over. Table 2 summarises the number of EVD cases and deaths in Mali and UK.

Situation in South Africa

As at 27 January 2015 there have been no EVD cases in South Africa associated with the current outbreak in West Africa. In addition, there are no suspected cases of EVD in South Africa at present. The risk of Ebola being introduced into South Africa still remains low. Nonetheless, several measures for early detection and reporting of suspected cases have been put in place.

A national outbreak preparedness and response plan for EVD has been produced. Other measures instituted include (but are not limited to):

- Surveillance at South African ports of entry and healthcare facilities for at-risk persons from the affected countries presenting with fever has been intensified. Port health officials and healthcare workers are on high alert for any ill persons that have travelled to countries with widespread and intense transmission or other countries reporting imported cases with localised transmission.
- Eleven public-sector hospitals (with at least one in all nine provinces) have been designated to manage EVD cases and have been supplied with the appropriate personal protective equipment should the need arise. Furthermore, other hospitals within the private sector and military health services have also been earmarked.
- Many frontline healthcare workers, especially those at designated hospitals and ports of entry, have been trained on infection prevention and control practice for the management of suspected EVD cases.
- Alerts, guidelines and several other documents

have been developed to inform or guide healthcare workers as well as the general public regarding EVD. These resources are available on the NICD website (www.nicd.ac.za) and South African Department of Health (DoH) website (www.doh.gov.za). In addition, the country is monitoring the current EVD outbreak in West Africa through regular situation updates posted on the NICD website.

- A travel advisory has been issued and is available on the DoH website (www.doh.gov.za).
- The NICD has strengthened laboratory surveillance activities and has been designated as the centre of excellence for Ebola diagnostics for the SADC region. Moreover, the country has joined the international fight against Ebola by operating a mobile diagnostic laboratory in

Sierra Leone.

Testing for viral haemorrhagic fever viruses (including Ebola) 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).

Table 2: Number of Ebola virus disease cases and deaths in UK and Mali as at 20 January 2015

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	Number of cases among healthcare workers (number of deaths)
UK	1	0	1 (0)

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, and Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases, NICD-NHLS