

f WHO rescinds the Ebola virus disease (EVD) global emergency

In March 2016, Ebola virus disease (EVD) re-emerged in Guinea and Liberia after the two countries were declared Ebola free on 29 December 2015 and 14 January 2016 respectively. Since the re-emergence, 12 EVD cases (9 confirmed, 3 probable) have been reported in Guinea and Liberia. In Guinea, as at 5 April 2016, nine EVD cases have been reported (six confirmed, three probable), eight of whom died. More than 1 400 associated contacts have been vaccinated with the Ebola vaccine. In Liberia, as at 7 April 2016, three confirmed EVD cases including one death have been reported. All three cases are epidemiologically linked to the current flare-up in Guinea. To date, more than 100 contacts linked to the cluster have been identified. Plans to vaccinate associated contacts with the Ebola vaccine are underway. Sierra Leone was declared free of Ebola transmission for the second time on 17 March 2016 and has since entered a 90-day period of heightened surveillance.

Although work in progress, systems are in place to ensure that all three countries have the capacity to detect and respond rapidly when need arises. To

date, the affected countries have demonstrated the ability to respond rapidly to new clusters of cases, interrupt transmission and prevent further spread. As such, the EVD outbreak in West Africa is no longer considered a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. The emergency status was rescinded by the WHO Director-General at a meeting held on 29 March 2016 in recognition that the risk of Ebola being introduced into other communities internationally remains low. Furthermore, temporary recommendations that were adopted in response were also ended, signalling that any restrictions on travel and trade with Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone should be lifted with immediate effect.

More information is available at:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/Liberia-guinea-flareups-update/en/>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2016/end-of-ebola-pheic/en/>

Source: Division of Public Health, Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS (outbreak@nicd.ac.za)