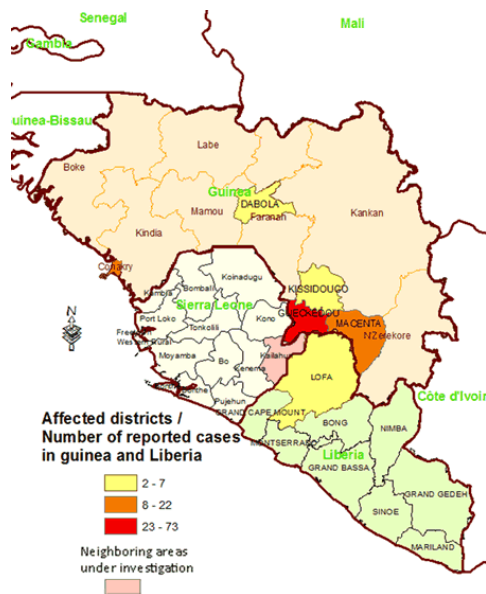


Outbreak of the «Ebola» virus: Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone

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The World Health Organization is reporting an Ebola Hemorrhagic fever outbreak in Western Africa, originating in Guinea. The outbreak has been confirmed in Liberia and is suspected to have reached Sierra Leone. Ebola virus disease (EVD) in humans, has a case fatality rate of up to 90%. No specific treatment or vaccine is available for use in people or animals. Awareness and protective measures is the only way to reduce human infection and death.

On 31 March Guinean Health authorities reported 122 suspected or confirmed cases, of which 78 deaths. The outbreaks originated in the southern districts of Guinea (Guekedou, Macenta, and Kissidougou districts). On Monday 31 March, a WHO spokesperson confirmed eleven deaths in the Guinean capital, Conakry. On Sunday 30th March, WHO confirmed two deaths in Liberia by the Ebola virus. Medecins Sans Frontières is describing the spread of the virus as an epidemic.

On 29 March, Senegal (Guinea's northwestern neighbor) closed its land border with Guinea and suspended weekly markets near the borders where fresh produce from Guinea were sold.

The areas affected were originally inland but have now spread to the coast (Conakry). The situation is changing rapidly and the Guinean Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization have advised the public to take measures to avert the spread of the disease and to report any suspected cases.

In order to prevent further spread, the European Commission announced on the 28 March that it is releasing 500 000 euro to help contain the spread of Ebola virus in Guinea and neighboring countries.

Please see the World Health Organization website for the latest information on the outbreak: <http://www.afro.who.int/>

Best regards,
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