
Sierra Leone widens Ebola quarantine to three more districts

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The northern districts of Port Loko and Bombali, and Moyamba in the south, will in effect be sealed off immediately.

Nearly 600 people have died of the virus in Sierra Leone and two eastern districts have been isolated since the beginning of August.

The move follows a three-day nationwide lockdown that ended on Sunday night.

[New figures released by the UN World Health Organization](#) show that 2,917 people have died in the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa, with Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea worst affected.

Two eastern districts have already been isolated and the extension of the indefinite quarantine means more than a third of Sierra Leone's 6.1 million population now finds itself unable to move freely.

During Sierra Leone's three-day curfew, more than a million households were surveyed and 130 new cases discovered, the authorities say.

President Koroma said the move had been a success but had exposed "areas of greater challenges", which was why other areas were being quarantined.

Only people delivering essential services can enter and circulate within areas under quarantine.

Skills shortage:



- **Liberia with a 4.2m population:** 51 doctors; 978 nurses and midwives; 269 pharmacists
- **Sierra Leone with a 6m population:** 136 doctors; 1,017 nurses and midwives; 114 pharmacists

Source: Afri-Dev.Info

[Ebola drains weak health systems](#)

In a televised address, the president acknowledged that the blockade would "pose great difficulties" for people.

"[But] the life of everyone and the survival of our country take precedence over these difficulties," he said.

According to WHO, the situation nationally in Sierra Leone continues to deteriorate with a sharp increase in the number of newly reported cases in the capital, Freetown, and its neighbouring districts of Port Loko, Bombali, and Moyamba, which are now under quarantine.

Country	Existing bed capacity	Newly funded beds	Extra beds still required
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Source: WHO, 24 September 2014

Guinea	180	0	40
Liberia	315	440	1,550
Sierra Leone	323	297	532

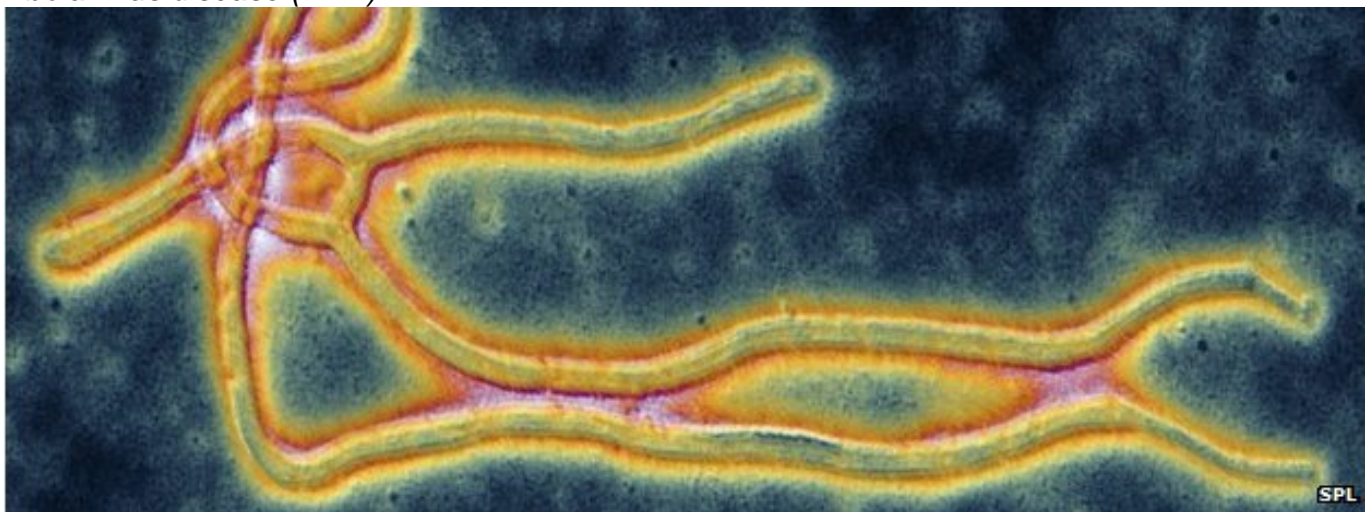
The BBC's Umaru Fofana in Freetown says Port Loko is where two of the country's major iron ore mining companies operate and the restrictions are likely to hamper business.

The WHO said despite efforts to deploy more health workers and open new Ebola treatment centres in the worst-affected countries, there was still a significant lack of beds in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with more than 2,000 needed.

The situation in Guinea appeared to be stabilising, with up to 100 new confirmed cases reported in each of the past five weeks, but it was still of grave concern, it said.

A high-level meeting is due be held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York about the Ebola crisis.

Ebola virus disease (EVD)



- Symptoms include high fever, bleeding and central nervous system damage
- Spread by body fluids, such as blood and saliva
- Fatality rate can reach 90% - but current outbreak has mortality rate of about 70%
- Incubation period is two to 21 days
- There is no proven vaccine or cure
- Supportive care such as rehydrating patients who have diarrhoea and vomiting can help recovery
- Fruit bats, a delicacy for some West Africans, are considered to be virus's natural host