

UNITED ASSISTANCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

23 October 2014

Info Cut-off: 230400LOCT14

(U) Liberia

(U) Non-Violent Demonstration in Lofa County: On 21 October, 100 individuals demonstrated outside government buildings in Voinjama, Lofa County, blocking the road. Demonstrators spoke out against agricultural policies in Liberia, including reductions in agricultural production, mandates against large gatherings, and restrictions on export of goods. Lofa County has been hit hard by EVD and is one of the largest agricultural-producing counties in Liberia. The demonstration ended without incident.

(U) EVD Awareness Team Denied Access to Workpor Town, Margibi County: On 15 October, residents forced an EVD awareness team from the ABC Foundation Liberia Limited to leave town. ABC Foundation Limited is a volunteer youth NGO dedicated to promoting EVD awareness throughout Liberia. Residents claimed the foundation was “spreading EVD to the town.” The populace expressed anger toward the group and any citizens that took information from it.

(U) JFK HCWs Protest Change of Status: On 21 October, a group of HCWs gathered at the Capitol Building in Monrovia to protest the change of their employment status from being employees of JFK Hospital to employees of the Ministry of Health, enabling reassignment to locations as needed by the Ministry of Health. The status change took place after more than 100 employees returned from a mandated 21-day EVD isolation period. JFK Hospital stated the employees were shifted to the Ministry of Health due to the hospital’s inability to maintain a full staff.

(U) Redemption Hospital Officially Stops Accepting EVD Patients: On 22 October, Redemption Hospital stopped accepting EVD patients. The hospital will treat the current EVD patients but will not accept new ones. Redemption is the second hospital in Monrovia to stop treating EVD patients. The Ministry of Health has directed permanent healthcare facilities to refer all EVD patients to ETUs so the facilities can focus on non-EVD related health issues.

(U) JOA

(U) New Study Finds Airport Screening at Departure Airports Essential: A new study from the UK medical journal the *Lancet* underscores the need for exit screening at departure airports in the heavily-affected Ebola countries. Without such screening, the study predicts three Ebola-infected persons would fly from the three heavily-affected West African countries each month.

Records indicate that in 2013, more than half of the 500,000 travelers who flew on commercial flights out of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone arrived in just five countries: Ghana (17.5%), Senegal (14.4%), the UK (8.7%), France (7.1%), and The Gambia (6.8%). In 2014, more than 60% of airline passengers from the heavily-affected countries are expected to travel to destinations in low or lower-middle income countries; countries with limited medical and public health capacity to respond to an Ebola outbreak. While identifying those with symptoms is important because they are at the highest risk of transmitting the virus, the study also points out that given the long incubation period, departure airport screenings will not identify all Ebola-infected individuals. The study does not advocate implementing screenings at arrival airports, suggesting these are not effective. Instead, it suggests public health vigilance is more important and effective in destination countries to quickly identify and respond to any imported cases.

(U) **Dozens Released from Treatment Site in Sierra Leone:** On 22 October, press reported the Hastings Treatment Center, near Sierra Leone's capital, released 45 Ebola survivors, issuing them health certificates that they proudly held up when released.

(U) **Worldwide**

(U) **WHO Crisis Team Holds Talks on Travel Measures:** On 22 October, the WHO Emergency Committee held its third meeting since the Ebola crisis began to discuss efforts to contain the epidemic. This meeting examined screening measures at borders and considered whether stricter travel measures are needed. These talks come amidst criticism the WHO has acted too slowly, and as a growing number of countries began putting in place travel rules for passengers from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The Secretary General of the International Federation of the Red Cross described rising calls for travel bans as “irrational.”

(U) **WHO Hopes for Ebola Vaccine by January 2015:** Ebola drug trials will begin in the next several weeks, according to a senior WHO official. The WHO and other organizations are choosing treatment centers for experimental testing in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Tens of thousands of doses of experimental Ebola vaccines could be available for “real world” testing in West Africa as soon as January as long if deemed safe.

(U) **French Researchers Develop Quick Ebola Diagnosis Device:** A new tool could allow doctors to diagnose Ebola patients in less than 15 minutes. France's Atomic Energy Commission developed this device and said it would be available in the affected region by the end of October for a clinical trial. The user-friendly kit, called Ebola eZYSCREEN, is intended to be simple enough to be used in the field without additional equipment.

(U) **Rwanda to Screen U.S. and Spanish Visitors:** On 21 October, Rwanda's Health Minister announced Rwanda will immediately increase its screening measures for Ebola by checking the temperatures of all visitors coming from the U.S. and Spain. Passengers with fevers will be denied entry. Rwanda is requiring all citizens who travel through the U.S. and Spain to also report their medical condition to the Health Ministry daily for the first 21 days after their return.

Rwandan authorities have already denied access to anyone who has recently traveled through Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

(U) **Liberian Expatriates Resist Ebola Stigma:** On 22 October, the *Guardian* reported that West Africans in the U.S. have started a social media campaign to counter discrimination against West Africans over fears they are infected with EVD. Liberians in the U.S. have developed a trending topic on social media titled #IamALiberianNotAVirus, expressing that being from a certain area in Africa does equate to having EVD.

(U) **Weather**

(U) Monrovia will have a brief period of mist the morning of the 23rd, marginally impacting helicopter operations. ***Rain showers will occur during the afternoons of the 24th and 25th but will remain light and isolated, only lightly degrading unpaved roads. Thunderstorms will move through on the 26th before dissipating on the 27th.*** Thunderstorm activity will remain isolated in the northeast mountain area of Liberia with fair weather being prevalent for most of the country.

(U) Conakry will continue to see afternoon thunderstorms throughout the forecast period with morning hours seeing fair weather. Storm activity will start to decrease for Guinea and Sierra Leone on the 27th. Dakar will continue to see fair weather through the 27th.