



# Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in western Africa



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Всемирная организация здравоохранения

Европейское региональное бюро

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# Largest EVD outbreak ever

As of 31 October 2014, countries had reported **13 567 cases**, including **4 951 deaths**.

- Outbreak began in Guinea in December 2013
- Involved **local transmission** in **Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone** but also **Nigeria (20), Spain (1)** and **the United States of America (4)**
- 523 health care workers infected; 269 died
- Medical evacuations to **France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom** and **the United States**

# Why this outbreak is different

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- First outbreak with **movements** of large groups of people, affecting big cities and multiple countries at once
- Countries' **coping capacity** has not been adequate to face such a large outbreak
- Affected countries have **weak** health systems, lacking infrastructure and human resources
- The response efforts must go **beyond** medical needs and address social, economic, development, logistic and security challenges

# Senegal (17 October) and Nigeria (20 October): Ebola free



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# Public health strategies for control

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- **Diagnosis:** testing in WHO reference laboratories
  - Handling specimens requires highest biosecurity level (**BSL 4**)
- **Case management**
  - Strict infection prevention and control (**IPC**) measures required (patient isolation, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.) and clinical management
- **Interrupt transmission chains:** contact tracing and 21-day follow-up
- **Community participation** to change risky behaviour and support the public health response

# International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)

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- Emergency committee meetings: 6–7 August, 22 September and 22 October 2014
- 8 August 2014: Ebola outbreak in western Africa declared a **public health emergency of international concern** by WHO Director-General
- WHO recommendations to:
  - states with Ebola transmission
  - states with a potential or confirmed Ebola case, and unaffected states with land borders with affected states
  - all states

# WHO recommendations to all states

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- No general ban on international **travel or trade**
- States should be **prepared** to detect, investigate, and manage Ebola cases
- **Exit screening** recommended
- No postponements of **mass gatherings** or banning of participants from affected countries
- States should be prepared to facilitate the **evacuation** and **repatriation** of their nationals who have been exposed to Ebola
- States should provide travelers to Ebola-affected and at-risk areas, and the general public with relevant **information**

# Beyond a public health emergency

## United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER)

- 18 September 2014: **Security Council Resolution 2177**
- First-ever UN emergency health mission; **headquarters in Accra, Ghana**
- **Objective:** work with others **to stop the Ebola outbreak**
- **Strategic guidance:** Secretary-General's Special Envoy, David Nabarro
- **Operational direction:** Secretary-General's Special Representative, Anthony Banbury
- **Overall health strategy:** WHO
- **Other UN agencies** will act in their areas of expertise



# Vaccine and treatment development

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- 2 potential vaccines in pre-clinical trials and 5 candidate vaccines under initial consideration
- Extraordinary fast-track procedures coordinated by WHO
- Clinical trials expected to start by January 2015
- Scale-up of vaccine stocks by June 2015 latest
- Several potential treatments considered, including blood products from survivors

# The risk to Europe

- The risk of Ebola spreading in Europe is **very low**.
- Sporadic imported cases in Europe and accidental contamination **remain possible**.
- European countries have **robust** health systems and are well **prepared** to respond to Ebola.
- There is low **risk tolerance** in Europe.

# Elements of strong health systems

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- Strong **surveillance** systems
- **Laboratory** capacity
- **Case** management
- Well equipped **hospitals** with isolation wards
- **Trained** doctors and nurses
- Strict adherence to **IPC** measures
- Arrangements for tracing and following **contacts**
- Risk **communication**

# Ebola and international travel

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- WHO **recommends** exit screening in affected countries of departing travelers
- Countries that decide to do entry screening need to ensure it does **not interfere** with travel and trade, and should **share experience**.
- The main issue is to provide travelers with good **information**.

# Medical evacuation

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“Countries should be prepared to facilitate the **evacuation** and **repatriation** of [their] nationals exposed to Ebola”.  
– *IHR emergency committee*

- Medical evacuation **ensures** that international workers are available to help.
- WHO **coordinates** medical evacuation for Ebola-infected international workers.
- **Treatment facilities** are being established in western Africa for international responders.

# WHO overall support in Europe

- Early **detection**, risk **assessment** and **investigation**
- Overall **policy** guidance
- Support on **capacity** assessment and scaling up
- Technical assistance on strengthening **preparedness**
- **Coordination** with the European Union and UN
- Support to **global** efforts (staff deployment and advocacy)

# Real fight is not in Europe

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- The most effective way to prevent Ebola infections in Europe is to control the epidemic in **western Africa**.
- This requires a fast and strong **response**.
- The international community is **scaling up** its support.

For further information, visit the WHO/Europe website  
([www.euro.who.int/en/ebola](http://www.euro.who.int/en/ebola))