

Current Health Event

Is Lebanon ready for Ebola?

To date, no confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Lebanon. While the risk of Ebola coming to Lebanon is low, it is important to put in place the precautionary measures. There are nearly 20,000 Lebanese living and working in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, who might travel frequently to and from these affected countries.

Editorial note:

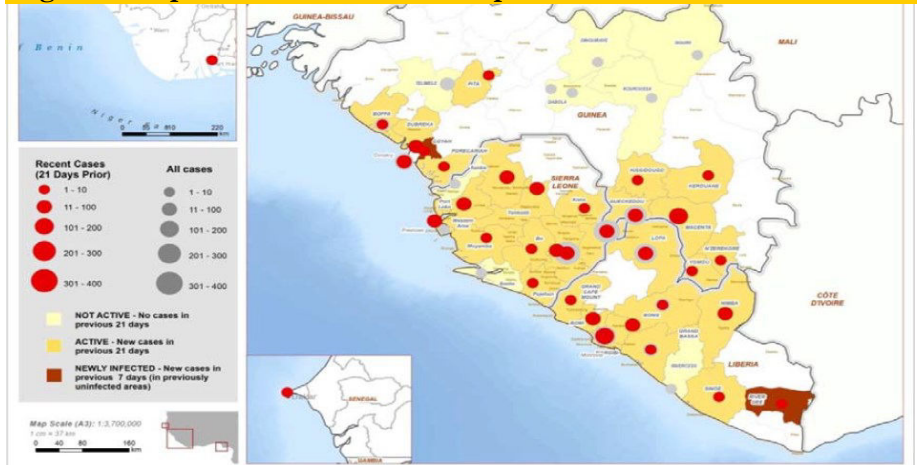
As of 28 August, a total of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) 3,069 cases including 1552 deaths were reported from Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. EVD was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 8 August 2014.

In the current outbreak, the majority of EVD cases are a result of human-to-human transmission at communities and at health care settings and failure to apply appropriate infection prevention and control measures in home care, some clinical settings, and in burial rituals. The outbreak of EVD in West Africa is unprecedented in many ways, including the high proportion of health care workers who have been infected. Internationally a roadmap for the Ebola response has been developed.

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has been pro-active in preparing for Ebola, in terms of improving surveillance of travelers and raising professional and public awareness about the deadly virus.

In collaboration with the national Airport authorities the government has set up facilities at the airport to manage traveler showing symptoms of the disease such as fever, weakness or bleeding.

Figure 1: Map of Ebola cases as at 6 September 2014



TRANSMISSION

The virus family **Filoviridae** includes 3 genera: **Cuevavirus**, **Mareburgvirus** and **Ebolavirus**. It is thought that fruit bats of the **Pteropodidae** family are natural Ebola virus hosts. Ebola human transmission is through direct contact (broken skin, mucous membranes) with:

- Blood or body fluids
- Contaminated objects
- Infected animals

Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or food.

MoPH decided to treat any Lebanese affected by Ebola virus if he/she wishes in Lebanon.

With the support of WHO and UNHCR, an isolation ward is under construction at Rafic Hariri University Hospital designated for possible Ebola cases. Hospitals with more than 100 beds have been instructed by MoPH to prepare an isolation ward for response to possible cases.

The MoPH has initiated a series of trainings for healthcare workers on infection control in collaboration with WHO. A set of training on safe transportation of patients with EVD has been completed with the support of WHO, targeting mainly first responders namely surveillance teams, Civil Defense and Red Cross teams. WHO Lebanon has provided personal protective equipment (PPEs) to the MoPH, Civil Defense and Red Cross teams.

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2013 Cumul	2014 Cumul*	Aug	Sep
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	33(7)	24(9)	1(0)	0(0)
Measles	1760(232)	221(94)	2(1)	0(0)
Mumps	14(2)	344(55)	26(2)	10(2)
Pertussis	59(9)	71(21)	14(3)	6(0)
Rabies	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	27(1)	11(6)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	141(8)	159(20)	22(0)	8(1)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	189(12)	194(29)	22(1)	9(0)
Cholera	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	13(3)	13(2)	1(0)	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	407(21)	173(12)	39(2)	8(0)
Viral Hep A	1551(220)	985(166)	130(17)	44(12)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	1033(1032)	453(450)	47(47)	11(11)
Meningitis	204(24)	143(19)	17(3)	1(0)
Viral Hep C	103(4)	62(1)	5(0)	1(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon