



Ebola Update – 22 August 2014

Since our 30 July bulletin on Ebola in West Africa ([Budd Bulletin 30/07/14](#)), the continuing spread of the disease and World Health Organisation's subsequent declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern ([WHO Declaration of Emergency](#)) has resulted in a multitude of measures aimed at containing the virus and preventing its spread to new countries.

Contrary to WHO's advice, many airlines have cancelled all flights to countries considered to be at risk from Ebola and Guinea, Sierra Leone and Monrovia in particular.

Benin

No measures brought to our attention as yet.

Cameroun

- All sea, air and road borders between Cameroon and Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Nigeria have been closed.
- No vessels who have recently called in any of the countries affected by Ebola are allowed to berth in Cameroon's ports.

Cape Verde

Budd's Cape Verde office advises that the government of Cape Verde has announced that for a period of three months:

- No persons arriving by sea or by air from countries affected by Ebola will be allowed to enter the country.
- All official visits to these countries have been cancelled and private individuals had been advised to do likewise.

Our local office adds that a vessel arriving from Sierra Leone in the Port of Mindelo was recently placed in quarantine pending authorisation to berth.

Equatorial Guinea

- After initially demanding that all persons wishing to enter Equatorial Guinea present proof that they had been vaccinated against Ebola, the government issued a new decree this week suspending permission for vessels travelling to/from West, Central or East Africa to berth or depart from Malabo and Bata ports.

Our local office has provided the following translation of the announcement received by ship agents in the ports:



Quote

Due to the pandemic seriously affecting most of the countries in Africa, this station of the Malabo International Port, through this document, all entries and outputs of the vessels coming from West, Central and East Africa are temporarily suspended until the situation is controlled.

This document invalidates the previous document that prohibited the entry to the country without the Ebola vaccine certificate, insofar as far as such a vaccine does not exist at this moment.

Unquote

- Issuance of visas has been suspended for those intending to travel to Equatorial Guinea from Central and West Africa.
- All incoming and outgoing flights to/from Sao Tome et Principe, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and Gabon have been cancelled as a prevention measure against the spread of Ebola to Equatorial Guinea.
- The Equatorial Guinea government has requested that West and Central African countries instruct their embassies in Equatorial Guinea to suspend issuing visas (to Equatorial Guinea nationals or foreign residents in Equatorial Guinea) for onward travel to any country in West or Central Africa.
- There have been no reported cases of Ebola in Equatorial Guinea.

France

As per our bulletin of 18 August ([Budd Bulletin 18/08/14](#)):

- 48 hours before their intended arrival, vessels are obliged to provide the full details of the ship's calls in the previous 30 days to carefully detail any incidents of illness or stowaways.

Gabon

On 14 August, Gabon introduced the following measures:

- 3 days before their ETA in a Gabonese port, vessels must provide the full details of their ports of call over the preceding 30 days.
- No vessel which has called in a country affected by Ebola will be allowed to berth.
- All people who are in contact with a vessel and its crew must wear gloves. People who are not wearing gloves will be prevented from boarding.
- Health inspectors from the National Institute of Public Hygiene and Sanitation will board berthing vessels at the same time as the pilots.
- Until the health inspectors have left the vessel, no-one else will be allowed to board.
- Until further notice, crew members will not be authorised to leave the confines of the port.
- Crew changes are suspended until further notice.



Guinea

The government declared a state of national emergency on 13 August to facilitate:

- Health checks on all persons entering or leaving Guinea by sea, air or road. Our local office is a witness to the fact that these checks are taking place. On 21 August, when boarding a vessel in Conakry, one of our surveyors had his temperature taken by national health officers and witnessed that the temperatures of the crew were also being checked in view of the vessel's departure. He was told that any person with a temperature of more than 38°C would be quarantined and have to undergo further tests.
- Tighter air, sea and land border controls.
- Quarantining of suspected cases.
- A ban on the transport of bodies from one town or village to another.

Our local office further advises that:

- Disembarkation of non-Guinean stowaways has been suspended until further notice and the authorities are doing everything in their power to ensure that no stowaways embark in Guineas ports.
- No cases of Ebola have been detected within the ports of Kamsar and Conakry.
- The national health officers checking crew temperatures are prepared to issue certificates of good health to vessels whose crew members pass medical checks but the fact that the incubation period is between 2 and 21 days suggests that such certificates will only demonstrate that the crew had no Ebola symptoms at the time of the verification.
- Many airlines have suspended flights to and from Guinea.

Ivory Coast

- The Port of Abidjan lifted its berthing ban on vessels who had called in one of the countries affected by Ebola.
- San Pedro has reinforced health checks on all vessels.
- In San Pedro, vessels with suspected Ebola cases on board will be required to fly a yellow flag and may be quarantined for 21 days.
- It is expected that similar measures will be implemented in Abidjan.

Liberia

- Our Liberia office advised on 21 August that both the ports of Monrovia and Buchanan are functioning normally.
- On 11 August, Liberia declared a three month state of emergency.
- The Western regions where the disease first originated have been blockaded by the military ([Budd Bulletin 07/08/14](#)) to prevent people travelling to Monrovia and/or crossing into neighbouring Sierra Leone and Guinea.



Nigeria

- Vessels from entering Nigeria via Guinea, Sierra Leone or Monrovia are no longer allowed to berth in Nigerian ports.
- We have just received confirmation that all flights in and out of Guinea, Sierra Leone or Monrovia have been suspended.

Senegal

- Budd Dakar advised this morning that vessels arriving via Ebola affected countries are no longer allowed to berth.
This is a new measure. Up until today, vessels sailing from these countries were simply subjected to health checks.
- All land and air borders have also been closed to traffic with these countries.

Sierra Leone

- The Sierra Leone/Guinea border has been closed.
- The border jungle regions where the disease first originated have been blockaded by the military to restrict population movement in and out of infected areas.
- Gatherings of more than ten people have been made illegal.
- Video Clubs, dance halls and private classes for students preparing exams have been closed.
- Motorbikes are not allowed on the roads after 19:00.
- All vehicle are banned from the roads after midnight.

Togo

No measures brought to our attention as yet.

Update on the Ebola Pandemic in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria since 30 July 2014

As reported previously, the present Ebola outbreak first started in the remote jungle areas which span the national borders of Guinea Sierra Leone and Liberia where there is a long tradition of cross-border exchange and the virus-carrying fruit bat is a dietary staple.

In these areas it was particularly difficult to contain the disease. Preventing people from going to the weekly markets the other side of a border meant depriving them of food and a source of income. The numerous rumours in circulation meant that potentially infected people were being hidden by their families, many of whom were in turn infected. Furthermore, the existing medical structures and resources were not adequate to cope with an emergency of this type.

2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa - Outbreak Distribution Map as of 14 August 2014



WHO's declaration of a public health emergency and support enabled these countries to bring unchecked border crossing to an end. The fact that WHO is also flying food supplies into the quarantined areas has also reduced the need for cross-border travel.

As of 16 August, WHO indicates that the figures for confirmed, probable, and suspect cases and deaths from Ebola virus disease in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone were as follows:

	New (1)	Confirmed	Probable	Suspect	Totals (by Country)
Guinea					
Cases	24	396	140	7	543
Deaths	14	252	140	2	394



	New (1)	Confirmed	Probable	Suspect	Totals (by Country)
<u>Liberia</u>					
Cases	48	200	444	190	834
Deaths	53	178	202	86	466
<u>Nigeria</u>					
Cases	3	12	0	3	15
Deaths	0	4	0	0	4
<u>Sierra Leone</u>					
Cases	38	775	34	39	848
Deaths	17	326	34	5	365
<u>TOTALS</u>					
Cases	113	1383	618	239	2240
Deaths	84	760	376	93	1229

(1) New cases were reported between 14 and 16 August 2014.

The total number of cases is subject to change due to ongoing reclassification, retrospective investigation, and availability of laboratory results. Data reported in the Disease Outbreak News are based on official information reported by Ministries of Health.

* Information from Liberia, throughout this update, is from 15 August, 2014.

WHO point out that the recent apparent rise in the number of cases found in **Guinea** (252 confirmed as of 16 August) results essentially from the fact that a few villages who had been concealing infected people agreed to allow them to be hospitalised after the government obtained the help of community leaders to dispel rumours and encourage the application of preventive measures. Despite first appearances, this news can therefore be viewed as positive.

WHO expresses greater alarm about the situation in **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia**. The recent attack on a Liberian clinic treating Ebola patients, several of whom disappeared into the community before reportedly reappearing again, appears to confirm WHO's analysis.

Although the number of confirmed Ebola cases in **Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia** and **Nigeria** rose from 456 to 760 during the period between 23 July and 16 August, no case has been identified outside these countries.

The **Nigerian** Ebola cases account for only 12 of the 760 confirmed cases and it has been established that all 12 of them concern people who were in close physical contact with a hospitalised patient who had contracted the illness in Liberia.

In the meantime, the WHO has stressed that although Ebola is a frightening disease because of its high mortality rate and the lack of proven treatment, it is not airborne and is only transmitted through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person or animal.



Rigorous application of the recommended measures of hygiene and quarantine are therefore considered an effective way of preventing the spread of the contagion from the source countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia and although no governments would recommend making anything but essential journeys to these countries, the risk of infection is relatively low for visitors who:

- Practice careful hygiene. Avoid contact with blood and body fluids of severely ill people. Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids.
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with animals or with raw meat.
- Avoid hospitals where Ebola patients are being treated. Embassies may be able to provide advice on facilities that are suitable for your needs.
- Seek medical care if you develop fever, headache, achiness, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, rash, or red eyes.

Additional recommendations for vessels include:

- Cancelling shore leave
- Refraining from purchasing supplies or food.
- Ensuring that the working conditions of Filipino crew members conform to the [POEA Guidelines](#).
- Ensuring that all persons coming on board disinfect their hands or wear gloves.
- Reinforcing measures to prevent stowaways from boarding.

On 22 August, the French press reported that one of the treatments tested on two Ebola victims may have cured them. It is also thought that a vaccination may be available at some time in the future. However, it is too early to be able to predict if and when either a treatment or a vaccination will be available on a large scale.

There are also fears that Ebola may have spread to the **Democractic Republic of Congo** where a virus with similar symptoms has killed eleven people. We shall monitor the situation with our Kinshasa office and keep our clients posted.

In the meantime, according to WHO, it seems that containment and hygiene measures are proving successful in preventing the epidemic from spreading on a massive scale to new countries although it remains a challenge in some parts of Africa.

Note

This article is based on information available to the Budd Group's Network of Offices at the time of writing. Insofar as new measures are being introduced on a daily basis, Clubs and their Members are invited to seek advice from their P&I Correspondents or Ship Agents before any calls in West Africa.

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