



**SITREP: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness Update:
Directorate of Health Security & Emergencies (DHSE) Ministry of Health and
Sanitation**



Event Name:	COVID-19	Country:	Sierra Leone	Update:	SITREP # 001
Report Date:	15 th March 2020	Time:	As at 18:00HRS		
Prepared By:	Ministry of Health and Sanitation				

Total Passengers Screened as at March 13: 10,239	Travelers Completed Quarantine as at March 14: 87	Persons currently under Quarantine as at March 14: 31
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HIGHLIGHTS

- No COVID-19 case reported or confirmed in the country since the outbreak was reported in China
- The National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is at activation Level 2 of The Public Health Emergency Management Program
- A second version of Travel advisory on has been issued by the Government of Sierra Leone on March 15, 2020, which will come into force on Monday, March 16, 2020.
- His Excellency, The President of the Republic, with the Minister of Health and Sanitation, jointly visited the International Airport and the Sierra Leone Guinea Border to assess preparedness measures put in place to prevent importation of COVID-19.



GENDEMA (LIBERIA BORDER) VISITS





BACKGROUND AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

The virus has now been detected in over 134 countries internationally. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “corona virus disease 2019” (*abbreviated “COVID-19”*). On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern. (PHEIC).

At the National Level, the National Public Health Emergency Management Committee (NPHEMC), under the leadership of the Chief Medical Officer, discussed the outbreak and subsequently directed activation of the Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre PHNEOC to activate to Level two (2) incidence response, with the Director of Health Security and Emergency being the de facto Incident Manager.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIONS AND RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS

Preparedness and Response Coordination

- A coordination system has been established to oversee an integrated operational preparedness to respond to a potential 2019 Coronavirus outbreak in the country
- The Minister of Health and Sanitation is providing an oversight role for coordinating preparedness
- The IM Chairs the Emergency Management meetings on COVID-19 which are held on Mondays and Fridays at the National EOC, every week.
- Response Pillars activities have been heightened to establish vigilance
- Resources are being mobilized for nationwide preparedness and response activities

Points of Entry Management

- All incoming passengers with travel history to countries with 50 cases or more within the past 14 days prior to their arrival are quarantined for up to 14 days.
- The government has instituted two options of Quarantine measures, that is, Managed Quarantine by the government and Self-Quarantine for Organizations and Foreign Embassies
- Stringent screening procedures are being implemented at the all POEs.
- Screening intensified at all crossing points with support from ONS
- Crash training of 325 POE staff(Hospital triage, Port Health staff, Immigration and state security staff) completed at designated land Air and Sea crossing points
- Weekly supportive supervision to designated staff for POE IHR core compliance ongoing

Surveillance and Laboratory

- The country has capacity to test for novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in-country, at:
 - Jui P3 Laboratory
 - Central Public Health Reference Laboratory
 - Military 34 Infectious Disease Laboratory and
 - The Kenema Government Hospital VHF Laboratory.
- All these labs have a concurrent capacity to run 20 samples, with Jui P3 Lab expanding to 96 in two runs during emergencies.



- Case definitions have been provided to guide screening, triage and testing and orientations delivered to public health personnel
- Orientations have been conducted on Labs SOPs, which include collection, packaging and management of specimens
- FETP graduates have been deployed to support POE staff in the screening of travellers
- Two cases investigated and tests proves negative over the past twenty four (24) hours.

IPC and Case Management

- Hand washing stations in strategic locations at the airport and other points of entry, including other facilities.
- A 6-bed temporary holding facility has been established within the airport facilities to accommodate suspected cases
- Huge supplies of IPC (soaps and buckets) have been procured by the government
- Two clinicians sent for Case Management trainings in Brazzaville, supported by WHO.

Communication and Social Mobilisation

- Messages for quarantine protocols have been developed and communicated to affected persons
- Television and radio engagements have commenced at national and district levels to increase awareness on the COVID-19 and ways of mitigating risks of infection
- There is ongoing media coverage monitoring to quickly handle cases of misreporting or disinformation
- Orientation of Health Care Workers (HCWs) on risk communication and notification
- Orientation of Civil Society Organizations successfully completely

Logistics

- A supply chain mechanism has been developed for the delivery of handwashing soaps, cleaning materials, disinfectants and heavy duty gloves at the various screening and isolation sites
- Personal protective equipment are available for use by laboratory personnel and other essential staff when needed.

GENERAL GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- Malfunctioning of Inferred thermometer
- State enforcement personnel positioned at the other unmanned porous border districts to track travellers entering the country from those route
- Stock out of batteries for the infrared thermometer operations.
- Lack of Thermo scanner at Gbalamuya POE
- Poor cooperation from bike riders on transporting travellers using other point of entry routes to ensure screening.
- Encountering some problems with hand wash measures implementation
- Lack of fuel for sample referral

CONCLUSIONS

- Resource mobilisation efforts are ongoing to the continued implementation of the Incident Action Plans
- The government has committed to providing around 60% of the IAP budget.
- Trainings and Orientation Plans have been completed and some are ongoing



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- Robust social mobilization plans have been developed and awaiting funding to commence implementation

References:

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