



**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 in Quarantine as at March 14: 31

HIGHLIGHTS

- No confirmed case of COVID-19 in the country.
- The Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre (PHNEOC) is activated at Level 2 as defined in the Concept of Operations (ConOps).
- A second version of Travel Advisory has been issued by the Government of Sierra Leone on March 13, 2020, which will come into force on Monday, March 16, 2020.
- His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, with the Minister of Health and Sanitation, jointly visited the Freetown International Airport and the Sierra Leone/ Guinea Border at Gbalamuya to assess preparedness measures for COVID-19.
- The Director of Health of Health Security and Emergencies (Incident Manager) and District Medical Officer of Pujehun leading an assessment team at the Sierra Leone/Liberia border.



JENDEMA (LIBERIA BORDER) VISITS





BACKGROUND AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

The virus has now been confirmed in all regions of the world. 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), which has now been declared a pandemic.

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 (IM).

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness and Response Coordination

- A coordination system has been established to oversee an operational preparedness for an integrated response 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 PHNEOC.
- Pillar activities, such as screening at major Point of Entries (POEs) and testing of suspected cases, have been heightened.
- Resources are being mobilized nationwide.

Points of Entry Management

- All incoming passengers with travel history to countries with 50 cases or more within the last 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, Organizations, Missions and Embassies, and Self-Quarantine for those from countries with cases less than 50
- Stringent screening procedures are being implemented at major POEs.
- Crash training of 325 POE staff(Hospital triage, Port Health, Immigration and state security) 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/Connaught Molecular Lab
 - 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; orientations to health personnel ongoing.



- 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 suspect samples 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
- 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
- Ongoing monitoring of media coverage to quickly handle cases of misconceptions or misinformation, particularly social media
- Orientation of Civil Society Organizations successfully completely
- Printed and distributed IEC materials to various public spaces

Logistics

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

GENERAL GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- Malfunctioning of Inferred thermometers at Lungi International Airport 4/15 functional.
- No state enforcement officers positioned at unmanned crossing points to track travellers entering the country
- Lack of Thermo scanner at Gbalamuya POE
- Bike/Keke (tricycle) riders are transporting travellers using other point of entry routes that evades screening.
- Majority of community members are still not adhering to hand wash practices
- Difficulties in accessing fuel for sample transportation to reference labs
- Inadequate resources to fully support critical preparedness and response activities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Resource mobilisation efforts to continue for implementation of the Incident Action Plan
- Replacement of aged Infra-Red Thermometers at all POEs.
- Train and deploy state enforcement officers at unmanned border crossing points to track travellers entering the country.
- Immediately procure and install a Thermo scanner at Gbalamuya POE
- Engage bike/Keke (tricycle) riders association on COVID-19 prevention measures.
- Enhance sensitization campaigns for community members to adhere to hand hygiene practices
- Streamline fuel procurement procedures to ease sample transportation to reference labs

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