

U.S. Embassy Freetown, Sierra Leone
Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Viral Hemorrhagic Fever in Guinea
March 24, 2014

The U.S. Embassy alerts U.S. citizens to the latest news from the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding Ebola hemorrhagic fever. Currently there are no proven victims in Sierra Leone, but there are some cases under investigation and suspected to be positive for Ebola hemorrhagic fever.

Ebola is contracted through contact with blood and body fluids or contaminated articles. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola virus, though 8-10 days is most common.

A person suffering from Ebola presents with a sudden onset of high fever with any of the following: vomiting, diarrhea, headache, vomits blood, has joint or muscle pains, bleeds through the body openings (eyes, nose, gums, ears, and anus) and has reduced urine. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and WHO have no current travel restrictions in place, it is prudent to avoid funerals at this time. For more information on Ebola hemorrhagic fever, please visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.

There has been an unknown disease in the Guinea Forest Region since February 2014. The Government of Guinea has been investigating the situation and sent samples of the disease to be tested. On March 22, 2014, the Guinean Ministry of Public Health and Hygiene confirmed that six of the twelve samples sent to Dakar and Lyon for testing came back positive for Ebola.

As a result, the Government of Guinea has confirmed the presence of the Ebola virus in the Nzérékoré region, mostly in the administrative district of Guéckédou and in the town of Macenta. Medical teams to control the spread of Ebola are working the areas in Guinea that have been affected.

The six samples confirmed as Ebola are from the Forest Region. The international community is mobilized to support the Government of Guinea to mount a response. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has set an isolation center in Macenta to care for suspected cases and is preparing to set up another isolation camp in Guéckédou. MSF is also tracing people who may have been in contact with the virus after handling corpses of those who may have died from it.

Three out of the six individuals whose test samples came back positive for Ebola have died. According to the Ministry of Health, these are individuals who were exposed to infected people due to travel to the Forest Region where they attended funerals. However, it is not confirmed that the cases in Conakry are Ebola. Among the dead in Conakry is a health care practitioner. Health care practitioners have been particularly affected. Out of the 59 total deaths among the 80 reported cases, at least 10 were medical providers.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Sierra Leone enroll in the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) at www.Travel.State.Gov. STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Contact the U.S. embassy for up-to-date information on travel restrictions by visiting the [U.S. Embassy Freetown](#) website. You can also get global updates at the U.S. Department of State [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), where you can find the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Country Specific Information](#). If you don't have internet access, you can get current information on safety and security by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States, or for callers from other countries, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and download our free [Smart Traveler iPhone App](#) to have travel information at your fingertips.

The U.S. Embassy in Freetown is located at Leicester Square, Regent. If you have questions or concerns about safety or related issues, contact the consular section at the Embassy by sending an email to consularfreetown@state.gov or calling 232(76) 515-000 or 076-515-000. For after- hours emergencies, please call Tel: 232-(76) 515-000 or 076-515-000.