



Deadly Ebola Outbreak Hits West Africa

Beginning in March 2014 and continuing over the past year, a devastating Ebola outbreak in West Africa caused widespread suffering and damaged fragile public health systems. The nations of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were particularly hard-hit by this crisis, the deadliest Ebola outbreak in recorded history,¹ with more than 10,000 lives lost as of March 15, 2015.²

Today, there are encouraging signs in all three countries, but much work remains to be done. To ensure that positive trends continue—and the outbreak is ended—the Red Cross remains on the ground with continued disease surveillance and tracing of people who came into contact with Ebola patients, combined with ongoing efforts to strengthen community engagement. The Red Cross is also working to support long-term recovery in affected communities, where countless people have lost multiple family members and, in many cases, all of their possessions.

Ebola Survivors Need Ongoing Support

Binta Bah, 35, lives in the Komende Luyama community in Sierra Leone. After visiting and helping care for a sick neighbor, Binta became nauseated and feverish—she had contracted the Ebola virus. Binta was taken to the Red Cross Ebola treatment center in nearby Kenema, where she spent three weeks in treatment, barely conscious.

Two days after she returned to her home, two of her daughters began to show signs of Ebola. Her youngest, an infant, passed away soon afterward, and her daughter Doris spent 12 days at the treatment center. In the meantime, her husband also passed away.

Binta's health has improved, but she still suffers from chronic joint pain. She has six dependents to support, and all of her possessions were burned during the outbreak to prevent the spread of infection. According to Binta, her community's greatest needs are food, clothing, medication and farming tools as residents begin to recover and rebuild their lives.



In Kailahun, Sierra Leone, Red Cross volunteers met face-to-face with people in the community to help them understand how the Ebola virus spreads and how they can protect themselves.

¹CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/index.html>

²CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/case-counts.html>

Red Cross Network Responds to the Crisis

Since the crisis began, the global Red Cross network has deployed more than 370 international staff to the region, trained more than 6,000 volunteers to respond to the Ebola outbreak and opened two Ebola treatment centers in Sierra Leone. The Red Cross societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea have led disease-prevention educational efforts, assisted with safe and dignified burials and provided emotional support to those affected by the disease. The local volunteers mobilized in these countries have helped bring information and education about Ebola to millions of people at risk.

American Red Cross Provides Funding, Technical Expertise

With the help of our generous donors, the American Red Cross has raised \$7.6 million to help people in the affected West African countries, and as of March 18, 2015, has already spent or committed nearly \$4.7 million for relief and recovery efforts in what will be an ongoing, long-term effort.

As part of the global Red Cross network response to the crisis, the American Red Cross provided funding and technical support, including telecommunications and information management assistance for relief workers on the ground. In addition, we helped raise awareness about disease prevention, traced those who came into contact with Ebola patients, offered emotional support to families, and assisted with clinical case management as well as safe and dignified burials for so many who lost their lives.

To date, the American Red Cross has deployed eight disaster specialists to the affected region. We have also provided remote mapping and data management for the affected countries in partnership with the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap team, global Red Cross network partners and other organizations. These maps are critically important to health care workers as



Beneficiary communication members of a Liberian Red Cross Safe & Dignified Burial team record data using mobile phones, which allows for later analysis and mapping of cases.

they provide disease prevention education, conduct daily follow-up in communities with reported cases and offer compassionate care for those affected.

And with accurate health information in short supply, we have adapted our First Aid mobile apps in West Africa to include Ebola content. Country-specific First Aid apps include information about Ebola prevention and treatment, and can be used to share vital communications.

Today, the American Red Cross is working with the Liberian and Danish Red Cross societies on an Ebola Response Program that will provide lifesaving Ebola information, psychosocial support and access to clean water directly to more than 850 households—and indirectly to more than 120,000 people.

As we plan future programming options in Liberia, we are also collaborating with Red Cross partners to implement an innovative, community-based resilience program in targeted border communities, providing Liberians with the resources and knowledge they need to prevent and mitigate future cross-border outbreaks and disasters.

Thank You

The mission of the American Red Cross is to prevent human suffering in the face of emergencies. The remarkable generosity of our supporters—individuals, corporations and foundations—drives our ability to provide relief to those in need and assist our partners in the global Red Cross network. We are grateful for your trust.