





Media Newsletter Issue # 5



Welcome to the Internews Newsletter for media in Liberia. This newsletter is created with the intent to support the work of local media in reporting about Ebola and Ebola-related issues in Liberia. Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.



New Ebola case, plus WHO advise for burial sites

Monrovia, Liberia – The Liberian government says at least 80 persons have been quarantined including the six children of an Ebola-infected woman who was discovered on 20 March in Montserrado County.

According to the Social Mobilization Chairperson Rev. John Sumo, the woman is receiving treatment at an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. "We are still awaiting reliable information on the source of this new Ebola case," he said.

"Do not believe in any rumor. Rely on information from official sources. When there is more information, we will keep the public informed."

More than 3,900 persons are officially known to have died of the disease in Liberia.

24 March marked one year since the first Ebola case was identified in Liberia. The government says the first case came into the country from neighboring Guinea, which has also been badly hit by the disease that has no known cure, according to health experts.

The discovery of the new Ebola case dashed several weeks of hopes among Liberians who looked forward to the government's declaration of an Ebola-free nation in mid-April.

The World Health Organization (WHO) encourages the families and relatives of Ebola victims not to tamper with their graves. The health body stresses that it is absolutely safe to visit the burial sites at any time only if they families intend to lay flowers on graves.

WHO also adds that strict safety measures including environmental impact assessment were carefully considered before the dead bodies of Ebola victims could be buried. Families and relatives are advised to always inform their Community Health Teams before going closer to burial sites.

Collaboration with local media and communities

County Health Teams are encouraging the local media to partner with them in fighting Ebola. The potential of the local media to effectively dismiss rumors and shape people's perceptions with credible information should not be undermined.

As health experts engage in a border strategy, the local media and the communities can bolster their outreach to the local population. That way, complains about Ebola transmissions as a result of weak surveillance or non-respect of prevention measures will not surface.











Sources

- World Health Organization (WHO)
 Olivia Pratt Dennis, Social Mobilization Officer
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 dennis@who.int
- Sustainable Community Development and Environmental and Sanitation Trokon C. Yeabah, Administrator Phone: 0880035251 scodes_environment@yahoo.com

For media enquiries, please contact

World Health Organization (WHO)
 Olivia Pratt Dennis, Social Mobilization Officer
 Phone: 0770114949 / 0886984377
 dennis@who.int

It is recommended that the local media continue the nation-wide fight against Ebola and not concentrate efforts on border regions alone. The new Ebola case confirms that Ebola could come from any part of the country. But as Liberia records huge success in rolling back the disease, the local media should touch base with the experts whose contacts have been provided in this Newsletter.

To effectively fight Ebola, Liberians should strictly respect the following guide from the government:

 Practice careful hygiene. For example, wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid contact with blood and body fluids.

- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment).
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates (chimpanzees and monkeys) or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.

For more information journalists can refer to the Messaging Guide on Ebola Communication: http://bit.ly/1BPXyLx

Here is the access to the Regulations by the Minister of Health (the "Minister") Governing the Control and Abatement of the Spread and Eradication of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Liberia: http://bit.ly/194g902







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Humanitarian organizations renew hope for Liberian Ebola orphans

Monrovia, Liberia – Some humanitarian organizations currently running programs in support of the on-going Ebola response in Liberia have confirmed that their goals also target Ebola orphans and are well-tailored to reach out to the entire community.

Save the Children and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says not only Monrovia and Montserrado have been covered by their activities. "Currently around 2,900 children orphaned by Ebola have been registered, including 2,200 who received our support," says UNICEF Child Protection Sub-Cluster Information Management Officer Dominik Koeppl.

"Support provided by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) include the registration and regular follow up of orphans, placement in kingship/foster families, psycho-social support, referral to specialized services as required and the provision of cash grants (\$150 USD)."

Koeppl added that other organizations are providing additional support.

The disease has claimed nearly 3,900 lives in Liberia. The West African nation is the most affected country compared to Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Save the Children is collaborating with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to identify family members of the orphaned children who could facilitate their work. "If it is not possible to find a family member then our teams will work to place them in foster care/homes," says Dave Hartman Information & Communications Officer.

Also family members and relatives hosting Ebola orphans can contact UNICEF and Save the Children to establish official channels for financial incentives and support.

"Our teams will provide material assistance including food, clothes and hygiene items to the child and host family," Dave assured.

Local media can collaborate with communities by identifying Ebola orphans and connecting them to concerned humanitarian agencies. Community members including families, relatives, friends and sympathizers hosting Ebola orphans are advised to show up and benefit from the \$150 USD per child.

Besides, Save the Children regularly search through communities for new Ebola orphans and also do follow-up visits with host families to ensure that they have adequate health care and psychosocial assistance.

Dozens of families assisting orphans have also benefited from cash incentives, according to Dave.

For community members' enquiries, please contact:

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 Dave Hartman, Information &
 Communications Officer
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Broadening fears of food poisoning and food insecurity

Residents in some Liberian Counties have been reporting on food insecurity sparked by wide-spread rumors of Ebola strains in some foods. Vegetable oil and salt sold in markets are among several foods that have been blacklisted by in families.

In Zwedru, capital of Grand Gedeh County, residents also broaden the rumors to interior villages in a bid to save their families from Ebola.

We now buy food from safer places like Ziah and Tai towns, says a Zwedru resident, adding that some people travel to distant places like Ivory Coast in search of food.

It is a common practice for the locals to grow and consume their own foods.

According to feedback from some Counties, the Ebola virus has wreaked havoc in families and school turnout is low. Children as young as eight have dropped out from schools and now hawk on streets, a journalist in Grand Gedeh County Moses Geply reported.

In River Gee, it is reported that Ebola survivors and their family members fear receiving food distributed by humanitarian organizations involved in the fight against Ebola. Princess Nyanway, 18, says she sells "rice bread" and offers the proceeds to her mother who purchases food for the family. My mother is a bushmeat seller, she adds, recalling how the outbreak forced her to abandon her job.

Need for community-based collaboration with humanitarian responders

A Senior Emergency Coordinator at the World Food Program (WFP) in Liberia Rick Corsino confirmed that the organization's national food distribution is absolutely safe and conforms to Liberia's Public Health regulations.

"WFP is supporting the Government Ebola Response through the provision of food to individuals and households that have been affected by the disease, as well as to communities with widespread and intense transmission of the Ebola Virus Disease."

However the instant food distribution has been halted following a nation-wide recovery process from Ebola. Food distribution can only be done after due authorization that takes only few days.

Since July 2014, over 600,000 persons in all 15 counties of Liberia were assisted with approximately 18,000 metric tons of food, says Corsino, adding that their program covers River Gee County where approximately 8,300 persons have so far been assisted with over 300 metric tons of food.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the transmission of Ebola through eating or handling food other than bushmeat has never been documented. CDC says there is no evidence that foods produced commercially have ever transmitted Ebola virus anywhere in the world, and that there has been no evidence in previous Ebola outbreak investigations of the virus spreading through food contaminated with the blood or body fluids of an infected food worker.

<u>Sources</u>

- Q&As for Consumers http://1.usa.gov/1F8WwjD
- Facts about Bushmeat and Ebola http://1.usa.gov/1txA768
- WFP's Response to Ebola Emergency http://bit.ly/ZCrKhT

For community members' enquiries, please contact:

- World Food Programme Amos M. Ballayan, National Programme Officer Phone: 0776500222/0886521795
- Food Security Cluster John Emmanuel Paivey, Coordinator Phone: 0770737537 johnemmanuel.paivey@fao.org







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National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)

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Environmental Inspection

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Internews "Information Saves Lives" is a six-month project implemented under the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (Hc3) project and funded by USAID. The project aims at building the capacity of Liberian journalists to report accurately on the Ebola disease and on the impact of the crisis on the local population.

For more information contact: Tapang Ivo Tanku, Health Communication Liaison Officer – 0770461348







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World Food Programme Amos M. Ballayan, National Programme Officer Phone: 0776500222/0886521795

Food Security Cluster John Emmanuel Paivey, Coordinator Phone: 0770737537 johnemmanuel.paivey@fao.org

Resources for the media

Facts about Bushmeat and Ebola http://1.usa.gov/1txA768

'It's time to recalibrate our future, build upon the accomplishments,' says President Sirleaf http://bit.ly/1LT58Ai

Executive Mansion http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2content.php?sub=14&r elated=7&third=14&pg=sp

Ebola crisis: First major vaccine trials in Liberia http://bbc.in/1K2W2MY

Ebola Vaccine Trial Opens in Liberia http://1.usa.gov/1zNcT5a

Ebola virus disease http://bit.ly/1g3T7Cr

For more information journalists can refer to the Messaging Guide on Ebola Communication: http://bit.ly/1BPXyLx

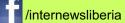
Here is the access to the Regulations by the Minister of Health (the "Minister") Governing the Control and Abatement of the Spread and Eradication of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Liberia: http://bit.ly/194g902







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Journalists reporting rumors: Update since 26 March 2015

Rumors from local people	Well-sourced and accurate responses
Montserrado County: Citizens say the Liberian government is deliberately delaying the announcement of an Ebola-free Liberia in a bid to keep benefiting from Ebola funds.	24 March 2015 marked exactly a year since the first case of Ebola was identified in Liberia. While the Liberian government and humanitarian responders had been on the verge of declaring the country Ebola-free, a <i>new case of Ebola was</i> <i>discovered on 20 March</i> . The patient now is receiving treatment at an Ebola Treatment Unit in Monsterrado. The contact tracing teams are yet to reveal the exact source of the
	virus. Dozens of persons have been quarantined including six of the victim's children. Monsterrado's Information Management System (IMS) is monitoring the situation on the ground via its local partners.
	*For more information, Internews recommends journalists/communicators to contact:
	Samaritan's Purse Annie Eashe, Montserrado County Coordinator 0886814311 aesahe@samaritan.org
	United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response Dr. Joa Okech, FCM Margibi & Montserrado County 0775263882 okechojony@yahoo.com
	Social Mobilization sub-cluster Satyajit Sarkar, Social Mobilization co-chair Phone: 0770267965 sasarkar@unicef.org







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River Gee & Margibi Counties: It is rumored that President Ellen Johnson's recent visit abroad was to negotiate the continued spread of Ebola and the need for more funds. Similarly, Liberians in River Gee County are saying that the vaccine is a government ploy to keep Ebola rolled out in the country.	Journalists are invited to have local government representatives as hosts in the radio talk shows / news to directly respond to questions from the local population about the allocation of money in the fight against Ebola. President Johnson Sirleaf was in the US in March to join the rest of the world in celebrating the 20 th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. Future updates on the President's outings can always be sourced from the Executive Mansion website <u>here</u> . *For more information / Internews recommends journalists/communicators to contact: Ministry of Information and Culture (MICAT) Abel Plackie, Director of Public Affairs Phone: 0886 844531/0775 889393 abelplackie@yahoo.com
Bong & Grand Gedeh Counties: Among the local population of Grand Gedeh, there are rumors that Ebola is absent in bushmeat, given significant drops in the Ebola cases across Liberia. Meanwhile,-residents of Bong County have reported seeing the sale of bushmeat in open markets.	Journalists are encouraged to continue spreading awareness among communities that hunting, touching, and/or consuming bush meat (specifically monkeys, bats, and/or small deer) <i>could</i> contribute to the spread of Ebola. Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals. Those who touch, skin and butcher infected dead animals are at risk of contracting Ebola. Locals have to be constantly warned that touching dead animals let alone eating raw meat. They should also avoid hunting animals that are sick or behaving strangely. To reinforce the message it is suggested to remind people that Liberia is still not Ebola free since last week a new person sick of Ebola was found in Montserrado and nearly 80 persons have been quarantined. *For more information / Internews strongly recommends journalists/communicators to contact: Environmental Inspection William Dorbor, Acting Head-Grand Geedeh Phone: 0886972683 World Food Program Scott Higgins, Information Management Officer-Food Security Phone: 0886914915 scott.higgins@wfp.org Also refer to the Messaging Guide on Ebola Communication: http://bit.ly/1BPXyLx Here is the access to the Regulations by the Minister of Health (the "Minister") Governing the Control and Abatement of the Spread and Eradication of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Liberia: http://bit.ly/194g902







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Bomi County: It has been rumored that the County Health Team is informing and encouraging people to cluster, shake hands and romance their lovers because Liberia is Ebola-free.	The County Health Teams have been encouraging people to stay away from social gatherings until Liberia is declared Ebola-free. It is important to remind local communities that Ebola safety measures must be strictly followed. Local media should work closely with County Health Teams and dismiss these rumors by inviting them to speak at the radio and to answers to live questions from the audience. <i>*For more information / Internews strongly recommends journalists/communicators to contact:</i> Environmental Inspection Daniel Larwubah, Head of Bomi County 0886487138 Public Health Initiative Liberia Kuoh Quenuah, Phone: 0886411638 qkuoh@yahoo.com Medecines Sans Frontieres (MSF) Judit Rius, Liasion Officer Phone: 0775065878 msfocb-monrovia-LiasionOfficer@brussels.msf.org
Lofa County: Parents say they fear sending their children to schools because they could be exposed to routine vaccinations which may carry portions of the Ebola virus.	Routine vaccination is given to children at all clinics and hospitals. These are the same vaccinations the Ministry of Health has given to Liberian children for many years. These vaccinations are given to protect children against many diseases including measles and tuberculosis and target children under one and "big belly" mothers, but sometimes they are given to all children under five. It is important to remind the local population that these vaccinations are free and safe. On the other side, it is important to note that the Ebola trial vaccine is not for children. No children will receive the trial Ebola vaccine. Right now it is only given in Monrovia at the JFK Hospital to 18-year-old adults and older. The Ebola vaccine is not given to pregnant women and it can only be given to people that have voluntarily accepted to take it.







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	*For more information / interviews, Internews recommends
	journalists/communicators to contact:
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	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Liberia
	Jacob Kersey, Education Program Specialist
	Phone: 0770267556/0880897960
	jkersey@unicef.org
	The Liberia-US Joint Research Partnership
	Stephen B. Kennedy, MD, MPH, FLCP
	Phone: 0886645830
	kennedys@lpgmc.org
	National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
	H. Clifford Lane, MD, Clinical Director, National Institutes for Health (NIH) Inquiries
River Cess & Grand Bassa	doepel@nih.gov
Counties:	The senior Liberian scientist involved in the vaccine trial, Stephen Kennedy says there is no danger in taking the Ebola vaccine because the piece of the Zaire strain
counties.	that has been put into the vaccine is very little and also a weak strain that it cannot
There is a wide-spread rumor	and will not cause Ebola.
among locals in Grand Bassa	According to the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
that the Ebola vaccination is	(NIAID) Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, it is imperative that any potential countermeasures,
intended to infect Liberians.	including vaccines, be tested in a manner that conforms to the highest ethical and
There will be an outbreak of	safety standards in clinical trials designed to provide a clear answer to the question
Ebola in schools that have been	of whether a candidate vaccine is safe and can prevent infection. This trial is
reopened, according to another	designed to provide such answers.
rumor.	
Similarly, it is being rumored in	*For more information / interviews, Internews recommends
the River Cess County that the	journalists/communicators to contact:
Ebola vaccination will face	Would Hastth Outputies (W/HO)
resistance because of weak knowledge about its effects.	World Health Organization (WHO) Olivia Pratt Dennis, Social Mobilization Officer
knowledge about its effects.	Phone: 0770114949 / 0886984377
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	The Liberia-US Joint Research Partnership
	Stephen B. Kennedy, MD, MPH, FLCP
	Phone: 0886645830
	kennedys@lpgmc.org







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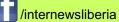
	Nimba County:	The Ebola vaccines are not provided to pupils or school children below 18. Health workers are officially
		recognized by the Red Cross mark on their boxes and white jackets. They often walk in groups and have
	It is rumored that an	their official badges.
	Ebola vaccination	For any rumors concerning schools, local media can contact the umbrella association of teachers in
	awareness campaign	Liberia. All safety measures have been placed in schools to protect teachers, children and pupils.
	was carried out in	Journalists are encouraged to visit schools and report about the measures being taken, interviewing
	Zeonold town by an unknown female	parents and teachers to reassure the local population.
	health worker.	*For more information / interviews, Internews recommends journalists/communicators to contact:
	Students and	For more information / interviews, internews recomments journalists/communicators to contact.
	teachers fled the	National Teachers Association in Liberia
	campus on that day,	Alice T. Freeman, Deputy Secretary General
	believing that she	Phone: 0886541802
	came to infect them	ntal_1938@yahoo.com
	with the virus.	
		Social Mobilization sub-cluster
		Satyajit Sarkar, Social Mobilization co-chair
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		sasarkar@unicef.org
	Maryland County:	Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in
	In Saywokan, a town	humans. The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission. The average EVD case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality
	along the Cavalla	rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks. Community engagement is key to successfully
	river, Ebola is	controlling outbreaks. Good outbreak control relies on applying a package of interventions, namely case
	generally believed to	management, surveillance and contact tracing, a good laboratory service, safe burials and social
	be Liberian myth.	mobilization.
	·	
		Early supportive care with rehydration, symptomatic treatment improves survival. There is as yet no
		licensed treatment proven to neutralize the virus but a range of blood, immunological and drug
		therapies are under development. Journalists are invited to host survivors and social mobilizers in their
		talk shows so that they can talk about Ebola and about its effects.
		*For more information / interviews, Internews recommends journalists/communicators to contact:
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		PCI Media Impact
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		Health Cluster
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		Ministry of Information and Culture (MICAT)
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Resources for the media

Facts about Bushmeat and Ebola http://1.usa.gov/1txA768

'It's time to recalibrate our future, build upon the accomplishments,' says President Sirleaf http://bit.ly/1LT58Ai

Executive Mansion http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2content.php?sub=14&rel ated=7&third=14&pg=sp

Ebola crisis: First major vaccine trials in Liberia http://bbc.in/1K2W2MY

Ebola Vaccine Trial Opens in Liberia http://1.usa.gov/1zNcT5a

Ebola virus disease http://bit.ly/1g3T7Cr

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