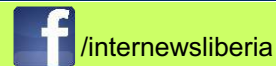


Information Saves Lives

**Media Newsletter
Issue #17 - July 4-10**



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.



Ebola cases in Margibi County: 2 new confirmed cases, source still under investigation

On the 8th of July the Ministry of Health officially announced two new confirmed cases in Liberia. This makes the total five confirmed cases (one deceased plus four additional confirmed Ebola positive cases) in Liberia. The newly confirmed cases come from the same village (Nedowein community) as the previously announced Ebola victims. The County Health Team was quickly notified and has transported the patients to ELWA ETU in Monrovia, where they are currently undergoing treatment.

120 people have been placed under participatory precautionary observation and 11 are considered to be 'of high risk'. This means that there is a very high possibility that those people could have been infected with the Ebola virus because they came into close contact with an Ebola patient. There is a chance that these 12 people will start showing signs and symptoms of the Ebola virus in the coming 21 days.

According to the CDC, the new cases developed symptoms of the Ebola virus whilst under participatory precautionary observation. The MoH has made a strong plea for respect for people who are on the contact trace list and in the community where the boy died. Hence they have renamed "quarantine" with the term "participatory precautionary observation."

The Ministry of Health states that the two affected communities Nedowein and Smell No Taste have been very co-operative with the health authorities. A spokesperson for CDC disclosed that it was the family members of the 17-year-old boy who called the burial team when the boy passed away. Community leadership and members are playing an active role in finding contacts and thereby helping their community members in getting treatment as soon as they start showing signs and symptoms of the virus. The Ministry of Health advises Liberians to quickly inform the

community leader or health team and call 4455 when someone in their surrounding area becomes ill with Ebola-like symptoms (high fever, headache, body pain, sore throat, vomiting, running stomach, rash, red eyes)¹.

Source of transmission: dog meat?

Deputy Minister of Health and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kateh indicated on the 9th of July that the Ministry of Health will issue a press release as soon as possible, providing more detail about the original source of transmission. The Ministry has stated that this statement discloses the results of tests done to determine the source of transmission.

The tests, however, will not show how the boy got infected - but will indicate if the virus originates in Sierra Leone, Guinea or from Liberia. The test will also be able to tell if the boy got infected by eating dog. If the test indicates that the boy got the virus in Liberia, CDC will investigate whether he was infected through sexual intercourse, by eating infected bushmeat, or by attending an unsafe burial.

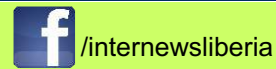
A spokesperson from the CDC states that it is very unlikely that the boy has gotten infected through eating infected dog meat. It states that it is highly unlikely that a dog is a carrier for the Ebola virus.

Health care services: ETU decommissioning halted

The two clinics (Unification Health Center and Charlesville Health Center) in the district have been ordered closed because health care workers that work in the clinic are under participatory precautionary observation. According to the last report (7th of July 2015), no health care worker from either clinic has shown any sign or symptoms of the Ebola virus. No health care workers have been tested positive for the Ebola virus yet either.

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The Ministry of Health has stopped the decommissioning of seven Ebola Treatment Units. The ETUs below are to be kept open to ensure that patients that are sick with the Ebola virus can get treatment.

¹ Internews has called the 4455 emergency number to check if the line is in use again: the call was immediately answered by an employee who asked for the identity of the caller and asked for specifics of the incident.

Case definitions (according to the Ministry of Health):

A **suspected** case of Ebola is a patient that has a fever that comes quick-quick and shows three or more of the symptoms of the Ebola virus. A person can also be a 'suspected' Ebola case because they have been in contact with a dead person that died of Ebola or with a dead body that died of an unexplained cause. CDC also uses the term a 'person under investigation' to describe a 'suspected case'.

Confirmed means that the patient has been tested for the Ebola virus and that the result was positive.

Contacts are people who have come into direct contact with a sick Ebola patient. These people might have been infected with the Ebola virus.

Participatory precautionary observation participatory pre-cautionary observation is the term CDC and the Ministry of Health recommend using for the practice of keeping contacts under observation after being in contact with a suspected Ebola patient. This term replaces the previously used word, 'quarantine'.

Signs and symptoms of Ebola: a fever that starts quick-quick, weakness, headache, body pain, sore throat, vomiting, running stomach, rash, red eyes, and/or bleeding from the nose or the mouth.

ETU name (location)	Number of beds available	Partners	Total patients	Total confirmed patients (on the 5 th of July 2015)
Bong (Suakoko)	10	IMC	0	0
Grand Cape Mount (Sinje)	10	IOM	1	0
Lofa (Voinjama)	10	WAHA/GOL/PAE	1	0
Margibi (Firestone)	10	Firestone	0	0
Montserrado (ELWA 3)	30	MoH/WHO	12	2
Nimba (Ganta)	10	Nimba CHT/PHI	0	0
River Gee (Fishtown)	10	ARC	0	0



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Media contacts:

Ministry of Internal Affairs

D. Emmanuel Wheinyue, Press officer
Phone: 0886222510
dwheinyue@yahoo.com

Ministry of Health

Dr. Yiaeh, County Health Officer Margibi
Phone: 0886812584

Shadrach Bestman, Press Officer
shadrachbestman@gmail.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Yolonda Freeman, Communications Specialist
Phone: 0775090926
yfreeman@cdc.gov

WHO

Liberia Communications Office
Phone: 0886516803



Stigma, social ostracism and violence: potential effects of unethical reporting

Last Friday at the IMS (Incident Management System) partner meeting, Deputy Minister Tolbert Nyenswah expressed disappointment with international and national press for publishing names and details of Ebola patients and their families. Both international media outlets and Liberian media houses have published articles identifying the 17-year-old Ebola victim and his family members by name. Some newspapers and online media have also posted photographs of children being tested for the Ebola virus and the houses of residents in the two affected communities in Margibi County.

"The publishing of names of Ebola patients in the press should stop immediately", he stated. "It goes against our Public Health Law and press that will continue this malpractice will be punished heavily". Nyenswah even went as far as stating that "journalists will be thrown into jail" for violating the law and privacy of the patients, their families and the community at large. The Deputy Minister calls upon both international and national press to respect the privacy of the Ebola patients and their families. In his speech, Minister Nyenswah refers to article 12.4 and article 14.6 of the Public Health Law, which state that patient details should not be published unless it is for "the protection of the health of others".

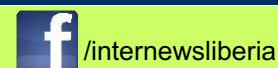
Right to information vs. do no harm

There is a principle in journalism that is called 'the public's right to know'. This 'right to know' refers to citizens' right to any information which has the potential to impact public life. During a national emergency situation, the public's right to know is especially important, as information can save lives. Lamii Kpargoi, Officer in Charge at the Liberia Media Center, explains that: "in case the Government does not share information quickly enough or information is kept from the public, it is the journalists' job to decide if the public has 'the right to know'". Journalists have difficult decisions to make when it comes to ethical reporting. In crisis reporting, these decisions can have profound impacts on individuals as well as greater society.

Imagine the following scenario, Kpargoi states: "a traditional healer has Ebola and is on the run. Then the public has a right to know the name and whereabouts of this person to protect others from getting treatment from him". In this case, Kpargoi says, the public has the right to know the name and whereabouts of the healer because the information can protect them from getting infected. But, Kpargoi explains, "to publish photos of children that are being tested for Ebola and houses of the family in Margibi in (inter)national newspapers is not ethical".

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Do no harm: ethical reporting

Kpargoi shows us there are no easy answers when it comes to ethical reporting: therefore, he advises journalists to follow the Press Union of Liberia Code of Ethics. He states that it is important to keep in mind the 'do no harm' principle that is the basis of ethical reporting. The basis of this principle being to not cause harm by your actions. According to Poynter Institute for Media Studies (a non-profit school for journalism), we should treat our sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect, not merely as a means to our journalistic ends. It is important to recognize that the reporting of specific kinds of information might cause harm to your respondents.

When we report the names of an Ebola patient and their family members, they can easily become stigmatized, ostracized and/or become a victim of psychological or even physical violence. In this case, victims in the Nedowein and Smell No Taste communities could be blamed for the reintroduction of the Ebola virus in their community, as well as the country. Deputy Minister of Health and Chief Medical

officer Dr. Kateh says that it is important to protect Ebola patients and their family members. He requests that journalists remember that they are "dealing with people's lives. Their life could be at risk depending on what you do".

Stigma of Ebola survivors and of their family members is very common. Take for example Jamila, a 24-year-old Ebola survivor from Guinea: "People looked at me like I'd come back from the dead, like I was a zombie," she said. "Nobody except my relatives wanted anything to do with me." (Source – Times Live). Or take Moses Lasana's story, a Liberian Ebola survivor: as he was preparing to leave an Ebola treatment unit, a friend warned him not to return to his rented room in Monrovia. He'd been evicted and all of his belongings had been burned in the street. "I was not even there when everything was burned off," he told NPR. The stories of Moses and Jamila show the importance of ethical reporting especially during the Ebola outbreak.

The Press Union of Liberia Code of Ethics and Conduct for Liberian Journalists

ARTICLE 5

The journalist should respect the private lives of persons when they have no consequence on public life. Journalists should ensure the respect of the rights or reputations of others. Enquiries and intrusions into an individual's life can only be justified when done in the public interest.

ARTICLE 6

Malicious information liable to discredit a person or expose him/her to scorn or hate should not be published /broadcast.

ARTICLE 28

The journalist should protect the rights of minors and in criminal and cases, secure the consent of or guardians before interviewing or photographing them

To review all articles of the PUL Code of Ethics: **Ethics, Press Union of Liberia (Source: Press Union of Liberia):** <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4Q2Q2dG5HT19xN3M>



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Media contacts:

Press Union of Liberia

Phone: 0886522334
www.pul.org.lr

Liberia Media Center

Lamii Kpargoi, Esq., Officer-in-Charge

Phone: 0777523144/0777008143
lkpargoi@yahoo.com

Sources:

Ebola's Most Disturbing Impact On Survivors Is Social Rejection (Source: Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/23/ebola-survivors-rejection_n_7644986.html

Ebola survivor stories (Source: WHO):

<http://www.who.int/features/2014/ebola-survivor-stories/en/>

Ethics, Press Union of Liberia (Source: Press Union of Liberia):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4Q2Q2dG5HT19xN3M>

Zombie beliefs and social stigma feed Ebola (Source: Times Live)

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2014/07/18/zombie-beliefs-and-social-stigma-feed-ebola>

It's like the story of job: Ebola survivors who continue to suffer

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/05/15/406748691/its-like-the-story-of-job-ebola-survivors-who-continue-to-suffer>

Public Health Law (Source: MoH):

<http://www.liberlii.org/cgi-bin/disp.pl/lr/legis/codes/phlt33lcolr429/phlt33lcolr429.html?stem=0&synonyms=0&query=public+health>

Code of principles (source: IFJ):

<http://www.ifj.org/about-ifj/ifj-code-of-principles/>

Society of ethical journalism (source: SPJ):

<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Guiding Principles for the journalist (source: Poynter):

<http://www.poynter.org/news/mediawire/1751/guiding-principles-for-the-journalist/>

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HEALTH COMMUNICATION
CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE



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Citizens' Feedback



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CROSS BORDER SURVEILLANCE

Some citizens in Grand Cape Mount County believe that the border needs to close in order to make sure Liberia stays free from Ebola.

Grand Cape Mount

Residents of Gbarpolu County state that there are 41 border entry points in Kongba district that are actively monitored by the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. The screening process has intensified since the new cases in Margibi were made public.

Gbarpolu

The borders need to be closed according to some citizens in Margibi County.

Margibi

According to some residents in River Cess County, borders should be closed. They also state that all ETUs across the country should be closed until all neighbouring countries are declared Ebola-free.

River Cess

Some locals rumour that there are too many points to illegally cross the borders in the country.

River Gee

EBOLA AWARENESS

The government needs to reinforce Ebola prevention protocols in the county, according to locals in Bong County.

Bong

Citizens in Margibi report that the County Health Team is carrying out awareness in the county. The CHT is encouraging locals to continue following the Ebola protocols.

Margibi

Citizens in Grand Gedeh report that the Ebola prevention protocols should be reinstated in the county.

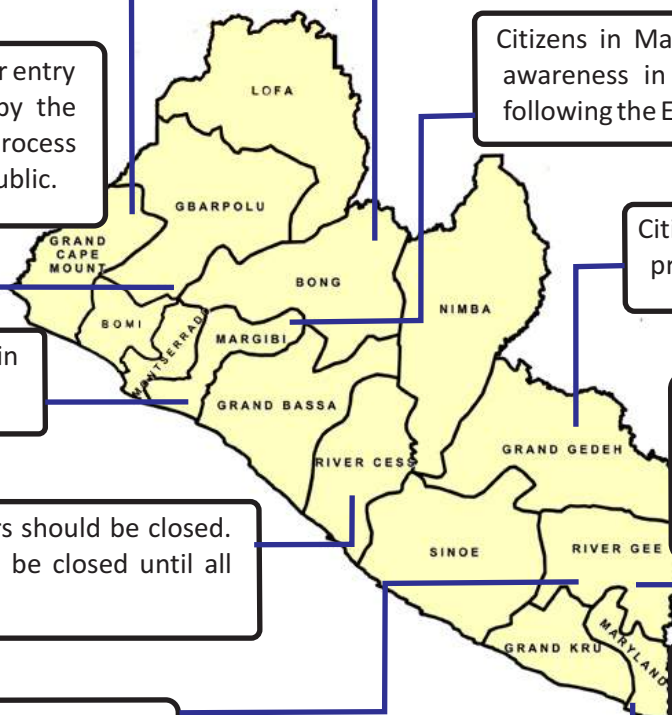
Grand Gedeh

Residents in River Gee County indicate that the County Health Team is resuming Ebola awareness activities in the counties. Task Force meetings have resumed and the group meets three times a week.

River Gee

Some citizens from Maryland County indicate that since the new Ebola cases have been made public, locals have returned to the washing of hands and respecting of other Ebola preventive measures.

Maryland



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HEALTH COMMUNICATION CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE



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Citizens' Feedback



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EDUCATION DISTRIBUTION

Citizens in Gbarpolu County rumour that the Ministry of Education has forgotten to give six schools in the Bokomu district textbooks during their distribution activities.

Citizens in Gbarpolu County state that the Ministry of Education has started distributing books in their county.

Gbarpolu

Residents in Grand Cape Mount County indicate that text book distribution has started in the county.

Grand Cape Mount

The distribution of textbooks by the Ministry of Education is ongoing and locals appreciate it a lot.

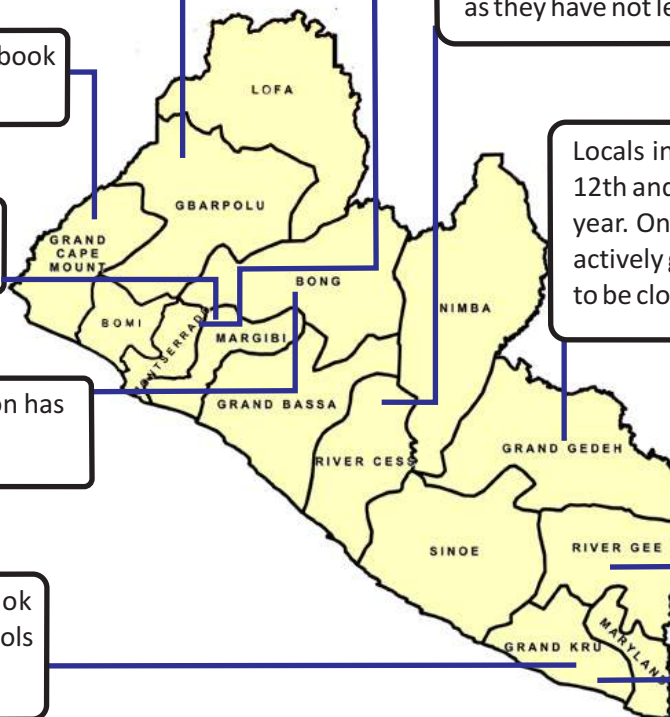
Margibi

Citizens in Bong County state that the Ministry of Education has started distributing books in the county.

Bong

Residents in Maryland County state that textbook distributions have started in the county: most of the schools have received their part.

Maryland



SCHOOL CLOSURE

Some citizens of Montserrado state that the peaceful demonstration of students last week Thursday caused the schools not to close on the 31st of July.

Montserrado

Some students in River Cess County complain that there should be no promotion as they have not learned enough to be promoted to the next class.

River Cess

Locals in Grand Gedeh report that schools in the county have asked 12th and 9th graders to stay at home as they will not be promoted this year. Only 18 students from the Zwedru Multilateral High School are actively going to school after the government pronounced the schools to be closed by the 31st of July 2015.

Grand Gedeh

Locals in River Gee report that since the Minister of Education has announced schools to close, students have stopped attending school.

River Gee

Locals in Grand Kru County state that the schools should close immediately because of the new cases in Margibi.

Grand Kru

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: Ingrid Gercama - Health Communication Liaison Officer - igercama@internews.org - 0770461348

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Citizens' Feedback



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POST-EBOLA RECOVERY

Plan Liberia has donated education materials to the Pleebo community in Todee district. The donation was part of their post-Ebola recovery plan.

Montserrado

BUSHMEAT

Residents from River Cess County report that locals in the ICI community eat and sell bushmeat. Allegedly, the locals are continuing to eat bushmeat as they say it has never been proven that Ebola can survive in all animals.

River Cess

VACCINATION

Locals in Sinoe County state that the County Health Team has immunized 95% of the children that missed out on previous immunization activities. During the previous Polio and Vitamin A immunization campaign parents refused the children to be vaccinated.

Some residents in Seede and Zejila town in Momo district are refusing to take their children to be vaccinated. They are saying that the vaccine is intended to infect their children with the Ebola virus.

Sinoe

NEW CASES

Some citizens in Bomi County would like to know if 4455 is still active and if they should continue to report sick people in their communities. They would like to know because the borders in Guinea and Sierra Leone are still open. They also state that some locals are still bathing dead bodies.

Bomi

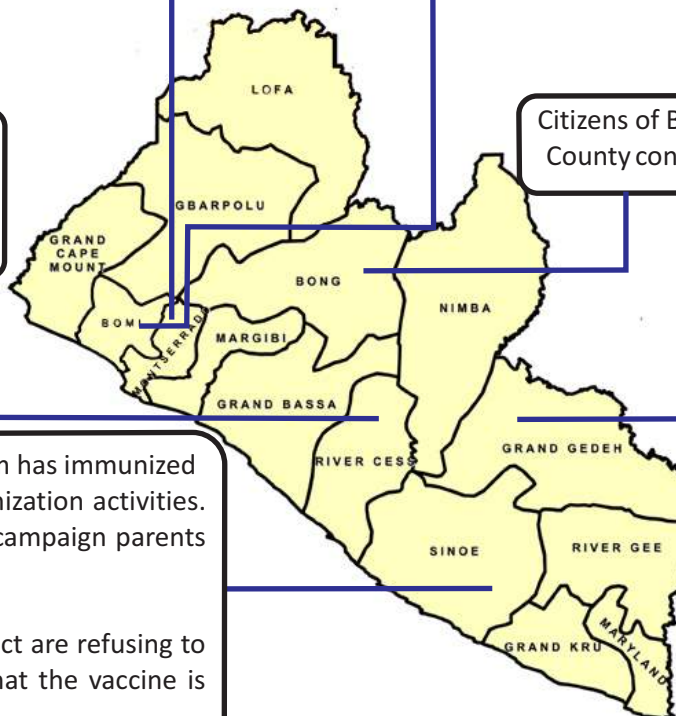
Citizens of Bong County wonder how the 17-year-old boy from Margibi County contracted the Ebola virus.

Bong

RESTORATION OF HEALTH

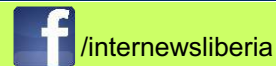
Authorities of the Martha Tubman Memorial Hospital state that they have all the necessary requirements in place to fight Ebola. However, they do not have enough trained people for Infection and Prevention Control.

Grand Gedeh



Information Saves Lives

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Rumors Reporting

SCHOOL CLOSURE

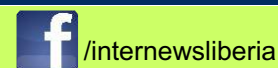
Rumors from local people	Well-sourced and accurate responses
<p>Montserrado County Locals from Montserrado County rumour that the president has said that schools will be closed from September 2015 instead of July 31st, 2015.</p> <p>Bong County Some citizens in Bong County rumour that the president has said that all schools should remain open until September.</p>	<p>On the 7th of July 2015, MICAT stated that the discussions about the reform measures of the Ministry of Education are still ongoing. The president has consulted education stakeholders and plans to meet Senate in the next week to discuss the possible school closure at the end of July. For now the education reform policy of Minister Werner is still in place and schools are to close their doors on the 31st of July.</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>MICAT: www.micatliberia.com/index.php/blog/item/4094-pres-sirleaf-happy-with-win-win-education-consultation.html</p> <p>Media contacts:</p> <p>National Teachers Association Alice T. Freeman, DSG Phone: 0886541802 ntal_1938@yahoo.com</p> <p>Ministry of Education: Maxime Bleetah, Director of Communications Phone: 0886565264</p>

NEW CASE

Rumors from local people	Well-sourced and accurate responses
<p>Montserrado County Citizens in Montserrado County rumour that the Liberian and USA governments are planning to bring Ebola back this rainy season. They also rumour that there is Ebola in Grand Cape Mount and Lofa County.</p>	<p>Liberia has a total of five Ebola victims as of the 8th of July 2015 (one dead case and four live cases). The four cases are currently being treated in the ELWA Ebola Treatment Unit in Montserrado County. The Ministry of Health has contacted all 120 contacts and is working together closely with the community and partners to make sure that all contacts stay under the required 21 days participatory precautionary observation. There are no confirmed Ebola cases outside of the Margibi cluster.</p>

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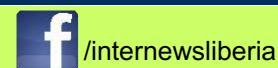


Rumors Reporting

Rumors from local people	Well-sourced and accurate responses
<p>Nimba County Residents in Nimba rumour that there is no Ebola in the country – it is just NGOs that are making up stories. They also believe that the 17yr old from Margibi County has died from eating a poisoned dog rather</p> <p>Grand Cape Mount County Some citizens in Grand Cape Mount County believe that the 17yr old boy that died from the Ebola virus in Margibi contracted the virus from eating a dog that died of Ebola.</p> <p>Margibi County Residents in Margibi County claim that the patients in ELWA are not suffering from Ebola. According to them the 17-year-old boy died of eating a poisoned dog. The reason that the government proclaimed that the boy died of Ebola was to get more money from the partners.</p> <p>Sinoe County Some locals in Sinoe County believe that there will be a new Ebola outbreak on Independence day (the 26th of July).</p> <p>Some residents in Sinoe County believe that there is no Ebola in Margibi County. They believe that the government is pretending that there is Ebola in the country to get more money from her partners.</p>	<p>There is no official communication on how the boy was infected with the Ebola virus. The Centers for Disease Control and the Ministry of Health are still investigating how the boy became infected with the virus. A spokesperson for the CDC states that it is very unlikely that the boy was infected through eating infected dog meat.</p> <p>It is not scientifically proven that domestic animals can be infected with the Ebola virus. However, to completely exclude the possibility, authorities (CDC/MoH) are investigating the dead dog.</p> <p>Government and NGOs do not want Ebola to come back to Liberia – it has cost the humanitarian community a lot of money to combat the Ebola virus. The government and NGOs would like to go back to the development programs they originally planned to (including road construction, agriculture, education, and health strengthening programs), rather than having to spend their funding on emergency programs.</p> <p>Ministry of Health Dr. Yiaeh, County Health Officer Phone: 0886812584</p> <p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yolonda Freeman, Communications Specialist Phone: 0775090926 yfreeman@cdc.gov</p> <p>PREVAIL Dr. Kennedy, Co-principal Investigator Phone: 0886645830/0770645830 kennedy@pire.org/kenneds@lpgmc.org/kennedy@ul-pireafrica.org</p>

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 Phone: 0886516803

Press Union of Liberia

Phone: 0886522334
 www.pul.org.lr

Liberia Media Center

Lamii Kpargoi, Esq., Officer-in-Charge
 Phone: 0777523144/0777008143
 lkpargoi@yahoo.com

National Teachers Association

Alice T. Freeman, DSG
 Phone: 0886541802
 ntal_1938@yahoo.com

Ministry of Education:

Maxime Bleetah, Director of Communications
 Phone: 088656526

PREVAIL

Dr. Kennedy, Co-principal Investigator
 Phone: 0886645830/0770645830
 kennedy@pire.org/kenndys@lpgmc.org/kennedy@ul-pireafrica.org



Resources for the media

Ebola's Most Disturbing Impact On Survivors Is Social Rejection (Source: Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/23/ebola-survivors-rejection_n_7644986.html

Ebola survivor stories (Source: WHO):

<http://www.who.int/features/2014/ebola-survivor-stories/en/>

Ethics, Press Union of Liberia (Source: Press Union of Liberia):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4Q2Q2dG5HT19xN3M>

Zombie beliefs and social stigma feed Ebola (Source: Times Live)

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It's like the story of job: Ebola survivors who continue to suffer

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Public Health Law (Source: MoH):

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Code of principles (source: IFJ):

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Society of ethical journalism (source: SPJ):

<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Guiding Principles for the journalist (source: Poynter):

<http://www.poynter.org/news/mediawire/1751/guiding-principles-for-the-journalist/>

MICAT:

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