

World Health Organization Says Ebola Death Toll in West Africa Nears 2,100



Geneva, September 6 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization (WHO) says almost 2,100 people have died of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Following a two-day crisis meeting in Geneva, the WHO also said on Friday that nearly 4,000 people have been infected with the deadly disease in five African countries since last December.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the worst hit countries, while Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo have also been affected by the virus. The WHO also announced the results from safety trials for two prototype vaccines. "If proven safe, a vaccine could be available in November 2014 for priority use in healthcare workers."

Also on Friday, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the world body will establish an Ebola crisis center to stop the epidemic within six to nine months. The UN leader said: "The goal is to stop Ebola transmission in affected countries within six to nine months, and to prevent the international spread of the virus."

Ebola is a form of hemorrhagic fever whose symptoms are diarrhea, vomiting and bleeding. The virus spreads through direct contact with infected blood, feces or sweat. It can also be spread through sexual contact or the unprotected handling of contaminated corpses.

Ebola was first discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1976 in an outbreak that killed 280 people. It remains one of the world's most virulent diseases, which kills up to 90 percent of those who fall sick.

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