

Sierra Leone Declares Daytime Curfew to Halt Ebola Epidemic



Freetown, June 29 (RHC)-- The West African country of Sierra Leone has declared a daytime curfew to stop the resurgence of the Ebola virus in its northwestern districts.

Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma said on television that he was imposing a daytime curfew lasting three weeks in the only area still reporting new cases of the deadly virus. The chiefdom-level curfew covers parts of the northwestern districts of Kambia and Port Loko.

People in the affected areas would be confined to their homes for 21 days, Koroma said, warning that anyone found outdoors during this time would be jailed. The curfew comes over fears of a resurgence of the disease that has killed about 3,900 people in the country.

Among the Ebola-hit West African countries, Liberia declared itself to be Ebola-free in May, while Guinea and Sierra Leone are yet to follow suit. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned earlier of an interruption in the retreating direction of the virus "that was apparent throughout April and early May, noting that there were 31 new confirmed cases in the week ending June 7th.

Fifteen of these are in Sierra Leone and 16 in Guinea, where the outbreak began in December 2013. Since the epidemic began, at least 11,207 people have died and 27,443 have been infected in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, collectively.

Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person.

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