

Ebola: timeline of a ruthless killer

February 1 2015

Here are key dates in the current Ebola epidemic, the worst ever outbreak of the haemorrhagic fever which first surfaced in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

According to the latest toll given by the World Health Organization (WHO), the epidemic has left 8,810 dead, mainly in the west African states of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, out of the more than 22,000 cases registered.

— DECEMBER 2013 —

- 6: A two-year-old child dies in Meliandou in southern Guinea and is later identified as "patient zero". The virus remains localised until February 2014, when a careworker in a neighbouring province dies.

— MARCH 2014 —

- 24: Authorities in Guinea and the WHO say that since January the country has recorded 87 suspected cases of viral [haemorrhagic fever](#), including 61 deaths. Scientists studying samples in the French city of Lyon confirm it is Ebola.

- 31: Liberia confirms two cases.

— MAY —

- 26: Sierra Leone confirms its first case.

— JULY —

- 30: Ebola is "out of control" according to the aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF). The affected countries declare measures including states of emergency and quarantines. Many neighbouring nations close their borders with the affected countries.

— AUGUST —

- 8: The WHO declares the Ebola epidemic a "[public health emergency](#) of international concern".

- 12: The WHO authorises the use of experimental drugs in the fight against Ebola after an ethical debate. A Spanish missionary contaminated in Liberia dies in Madrid, the first European fatality.

— SEPTEMBER —

- 30: In the United States, a Liberian is hospitalised in Texas, the first Ebola infection diagnosed outside Africa, and dies on October 8.

— OCTOBER —

- 6: First infection outside Africa, of a Spanish nurse in a Madrid hospital. She is treated and given the all-clear on the 19th.

- 17-20: Senegal and Nigeria are declared Ebola-free.

— DECEMBER —

- 18-19: UN chief Ban Ki-moon pledges support for Ebola-ravaged countries and to rebuild their health systems on a tour of the three hardest-hit nations.

It marked the highest-level such tour since the epidemic began. French President Francois Hollande had been the only non-African head of state to visit one of the worst-hit countries with a trip to Guinea on November 29.

— JANUARY 2015 —

- 17: The football Africa Cup of Nations begins in Equatorial Guinea after being moved there at the last minute following Morocco's refusal to act as hosts over fears of Ebola.
- 18: The Malian government and the United Nations declare the country free of Ebola.
- 23: US health authorities announce that a large-scale trial will start in Liberia with two leading candidate vaccines. Trials in Guinea and Sierra Leone to follow in February.
- 29: The Ebola epidemic is decreasing but is still present in a third of the areas of the three affected west African nations, UN Ebola coordinator David Nabarro warns.

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