Beat: Health

Ebola death toll rises to 5,420 as spread intensifies in Sierra Leone

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USPA News - The death toll as a result of the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa has risen to at least 5,420 after some 240 people died over the past week, with Sierra Leone alone reporting more than 530 new Ebola cases, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday. In an updated situation report, the international public health agency raised the death toll from all eight affected countries to 5,420. The total number of cases rose by 732 to 15,145 over a five-day period that ended on Sunday, with 533 of newly-confirmed cases coming from Sierra Leone alone.

Liberia and Guinea reported 80 and 74 new cases, respectively. "In the three countries with widespread and intense transmission, reported case incidence is no longer increasing nationally in Guinea and Liberia, but is still increasing in Sierra Leone," the WHO said in Wednesday`s report. "The outbreaks in Guinea and Liberia now appear to be driven by intense transmission in several key districts, whereas transmission is intense throughout the north and west of Sierra Leone." The capital city Freetown remains the worst affected area of Sierra Leone, where 1,250 people have died of Ebola since the outbreak began. Encouraging signs, however, continue to emerge from Liberia, where more than half of all new cases are now emerging from only one district that includes the capital Monrovia. New cases were also reported from Mali, where two more people are believed to have died of Ebola, raising the country`s death toll to five. The current Ebola outbreak in West Africa is believed to have started in Guinea in December 2013 but was not detected until March, after which it spread to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Mali. The outbreak features the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus, which is considered to be the most aggressive and deadly strain, having killed up to 9 out of 10 infected in previous outbreaks.

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