

PRESIDENT KOROMA LAUNCHES NATIONAL ‘ZERO EBOLA’ CAMPAIGN



Sierra Leone has made tremendous progress in the fight against Ebola.

Through clear and decisive action, we have seen a major decline in case numbers since December 2014 and yesterday we recorded zero cases nationwide. Communities in all parts of Sierra Leone have demonstrated that they have the power to stop Ebola – yet we are still seeing new cases every week, each with the potential to infect many more people. We have recorded one day of zero cases, but we need to stay at zero. Ebola has not yet been removed from Sierra Leone. The rainy season will soon be upon us and we risk the rate of transmission increasing if we still have Ebola in our communities during the rains.

We need to move on as a nation to pursue the Agenda for Prosperity. Our children need to return to school in a safe and secure environment. We must collectively strive to rid our country of this disease. I have made a personal commitment to do ‘whatever it takes’ to get to zero Ebola infections and I call on every Sierra Leonean in every community to pull together as we make a final push to get to zero.

On 15th February, together with President Condé of Guinea, President Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and the Foreign Minister of Cote D’Ivoire, I announced a 60-day target to reach ‘Zero Ebola Infections’. These 60 days will expire on 16th April.

I am therefore launching a 4-week national ‘Zero Ebola’ campaign to drive Ebola out of Sierra Leone. The ‘Zero Ebola’ campaign calls on all Sierra Leoneans to stay home for three days from 27th to 29th March 2015. The campaign will provide an opportunity for communities to be directly involved in the drive to zero cases, to reflect and to pray for the eradication of this disease from our country.

During the 'Zero Ebola' campaign, local communities will work in partnership with health workers, surveillance officers and trained social mobilisers to:

- **inform communities about the behaviours that continue to drive the EVD transmission in their own communities;**
- **encourage behaviours which can prevent transmission, such as regular hand washing with soap and water; and**
- **find, isolate and treat Ebola cases through targeted door-to-door surveillance and contact tracing.**

The following restrictions will be enforced during the national campaign dates:

- **All citizens to stay at home from 6am on Friday 27 March until 6pm on Sunday 29th March and from 6am to 6pm on the three consecutive Saturdays, 4th April, 11th April and 18th April.**
- **No trading activities across the country during those times**
- **No restaurants, bars and activities around the beaches during those times.**

In recognition that Sunday 29th March is Palm Sunday which is a major festival in the global Christian calendar, church services will be permitted and the stay at home restriction will be lifted from 7am to 2pm. Churchgoers must be at home by 2pm. All other restrictions will remain in place during this time.

There will be provision for movement of the following essential workers:

- **Health workers at public and private health facilities**
- **Staff and volunteers involved with the campaign and the Ebola response**
- **Security apparatus and private security companies**
- **Utility workers of Guma Valley Water Company, SALWACO and the National Power Authority (NPA)**
- **Fuel station workers**
- **Local and international journalists**
- **Arriving and departing passengers to and from Lungi Airport**
- **Limited commercial vehicles to convey churchgoers to Palm Sunday services**

The economic development of our country and the lives of our people continue to be threatened by the ongoing presence of Ebola in Sierra Leone. The future of our country and the aspirations of our children are at stake. I call upon our religious leaders, civil society groups and every man, woman and child in Sierra Leone, to wholeheartedly support the "Zero Ebola" Campaign and to join with me in Getting to and Staying at Zero Ebola Infections.