



## NEWS SITUATION TRACKING OF SIERRA LEONE VOL. 2



**Location:** Sierra Leone (Freetown)

**Issue:** Corona virus outbreak, 104 confirmed cases, 4 Deaths and 12 Recoveries.

**Date:** April 8 – 28, 2020,

### COMMUNITY PROFILING

### CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

### INCIDENT PROFILING

**Population:**

Sierra Leone has a Total Population of (7,092,113)

*Credits: Statistics sierra Leone census result: 2015*

**Basic Demography and Geography**

Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

**Sierra Leone Health Facilities:**

Each of the 16 districts of Sierra Leone has a District Health Management Team (DHMT) with an average of 50 peripheral health units (PHU) and over 100 technical staff. The DHMT is responsible for planning, organizing and monitoring health provision, training personnel, working with communities and supplying equipment and drugs. Even with this arrangement, the country has a weak health infrastructure with high rate of maternal mortal rate in the world. There are approximately four medical doctors per 100,000 inhabitants and out-of-pocket payments represent 62% of healthcare spending.

*(Credits: Ministry of health and sanitation sierra Leone performance report 2016)*

**Epidemics:**

**Direct Actors:**

COVID-19 victims and community residents

**Affected Persons:**

- 61 people infected
- 608 in quarantine including the President and his family
- 6 recovered
- 1 person dead

**Interested Actors:**

- Government of Sierra Leone Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).
- Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense and other line Government Ministries, Department and Agencies
- Medical and Dental Association
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Private sector
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- International Non-Governmental Organizations
- Inter Religious Council
- Traditional Healer's Association
- Traders union

The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic started in the city of Wuhan in China in December 2019. Since then, the virus has spread to more than 185 countries/regions across the world. As at April 28, 2020, 3,113,447 people have been infected with a total of 216,857 deaths and 925,442 recoveries globally<sup>1</sup>. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on human lives, the world economy as well as the socio-cultural and political landscape of affected countries.

Since the Government of Sierra Leone announced its first confirmed COVID-19 case on March 31, 2020, the country has confirmed 104 cases, 4 fatalities and 12 recoveries as at April 28, 2020<sup>2</sup>. The recent spike in confirmed cases indicates that the virus is fast spreading at the community level with 77 confirmed cases in Western Urban, Western Rural 15, Port Loko 6, Kenema 3, Tonkolili 2, and Bombali 1<sup>3</sup>. The virus has also affected more women with an average of 53 per cent compared to men with 51 per cent<sup>4</sup>.

The country has seen many medical workers quarantined, while the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Brig. (Rtd.) Julius Maada Bio, and family have been in self-isolation after one of his bodyguard tested positive for Corona virus. According to the source, the said bodyguard have been in 14 days quarantine and eventually tested positive of the virus.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6%20> (Accessed 28/04/2020).

<sup>2</sup>[www.mic.gov.sl](http://www.mic.gov.sl) (Accessed 28/04/2020).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

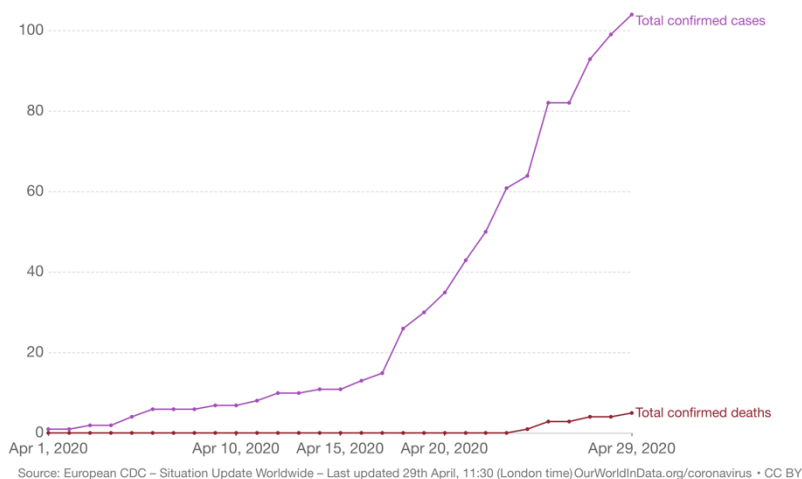
Sierra Leone has recorded viruses like Lassa Fever, Ebola and many others. The outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in 2014-2016 exposed the fragility of the country's health infrastructure and left over 3,589 people dead and over 8,704 people infected.

(Credit: Ebola Situation report-28 October 2015)

- Drivers union
- Political Party's Association
- Members of Parliament

### Total confirmed COVID-19 deaths and cases, Sierra Leone

The confirmed counts shown here are lower than the total counts. The main reason for this is limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death.

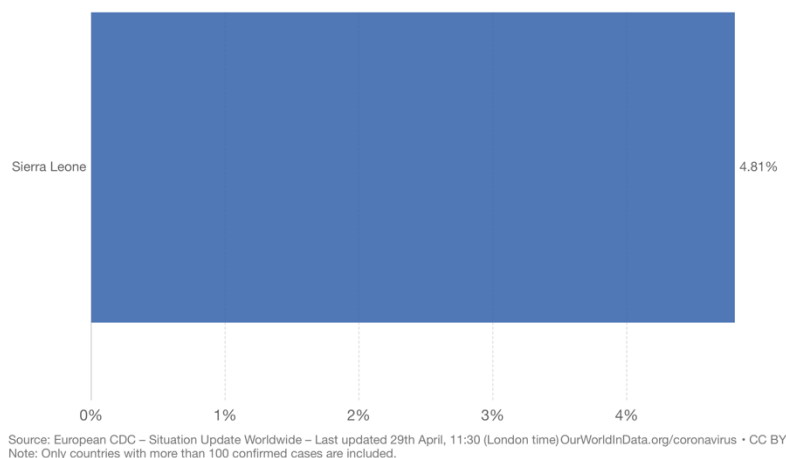


Our World in Data

(Figure 1: Shows increase in the number of confirmed cases that stands at 104 and 4 fatalities. Suggesting that the relative change is a positive of 10,300% increase in total confirmed cases and 400% in total confirmed deaths as at April 28, 2020. Credit: www.ourworldindata.org)

### Case fatality rate of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

The Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is the ratio between confirmed deaths and confirmed cases. During an outbreak of a pandemic the CFR is a poor measure of the mortality risk of the disease. We explain this in detail at OurWorldInData.org/Coronavirus



Our World in Data

(Figure 2: Shows the case fatality rate (CFR) of confirmed cases and death with an average of 4.81% as at April 28, 2020. Credit: www.ourworldindata.org)

## Risk Analysis

- Some health workers have been quarantined as contacts to Case no. 2 (the Medical Doctor) and some have tested positive for COVID19. This has heightened fear and anxiety within the health sector and other non-COVID-19 related patients in health facilities are concerned about their safety.

In actual fact, some have been self-discharged for fear of being infected. This also has affected women and children, especially pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five years, from accessing medical attention in health facilities. The implication is that many would resort to unconventional or traditional treatment and medicine with adverse consequences for maternal health and rights. Women and girls are also challenged in accessing sexual reproductive health and rights information and facilities.

- The spike in transmission suggests that community spread of the virus is on the increase, especially in densely populated areas including informal settlements and slums.
  - The country health system, once affected by the Ebola epidemic in 2014-2016, is also under tremendous pressure to deal with the pandemic if the number of cases continue to rise. Recently, there are reports of individuals not abiding to the quarantine rules. This could worsen the situation if such actions continue.
  - Furthermore, the culture of complacency has a dire effect on the COVID-19 responses posing a near-impossibility of social distancing and hand washing in the communities.
  - The pandemic is happening at the beginning of the farming season affecting early reparations in terms of brushing, clearing and ploughing. This has the potential to affect food productivity and household consumption, especially among vulnerable populations including low income earners.
- The pandemic also has far-reaching consequences on the health, safety and security of women and children. Lessons learned during the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016 revealed that sexual and gender-based, especially against women and girls were prominent during the lockdown and quarantine period in the country. According to the UN Population fund, more than 18,000 girls fall pregnant in Sierra Leone alone, when girls were left vulnerable and forced to fend for themselves for months during the emergency period<sup>5</sup>. These occurrences are anticipated and therefore require robust measures to protect women and children during the emergency period.

## Responses Measures

- Before the country's first case was confirmed the Government declared a 12-month State of Public Health Emergency on the March 25, 2020, while the country's air and land borders were closed for 30 days except for essential supplies. Large gatherings including in academic institutions, worship places and shrines have been restricted.
- The inter-district lockdown and has been extended a nationwide night curfew have been in currently in effect from 9:00pm to 6:00Am. The movement restriction between districts only exempt movement of essential goods and services which vehicles and body passes have been introduced to enable delivery of all essential services. All ferries and boats are only allowed to also transport essential goods with not more than 4 persons on board.
- The Government official working hours for all public sector workers have been reviewed from 9:00am - 4:00pm
- The Government has now made it mandatory for everyone to wear face mask in public spaces.
- The Government through the Ministry of Health and Sanitation activated the emergency operations center to level 2 and the reintroduction of the 117 toll freeline to report suspected cases.
- The World Bank announced a 7.5 Million Dollar grant to help the country fight the pandemic. While medical, test kits and Personal Protective Equipment's (PPEs) have been donated to the country by

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.unfpa.org/news/one-year-after-ebolias-end-sierra-leones-midwives-help-mend-health-system>  
(Accessed 30/03/2020).

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), AU, WHO and Chinese Business tycoon, Jack Ma.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Government should consider mass testing, routine surveillance and contact tracing, especially as the increase of community transmission across the country;
- The Government should intensify security measure in quarantine locations to ensure the strict observance of the necessary guidelines;
- Security personnel, especially the Police and Military should ensure that the human rights of all persons are respected while performing their duties during this period and beyond;
- There is need for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholders' engagements to raise public awareness and understanding of the virus, social distancing and other preventive measures at all levels;
- The Government should adapt innovative measures to ensure that basic necessities such as water and electricity be uninterrupted in areas where the services are available and provide support to hard to reach communities across the country;
- The Government through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and children's Affairs, the Sierra Leone Police and families should ensure that domestic violence hotlines and complain mechanisms are functional and swift in response to protect women and children, especially girls against sexual and gender-based violence during the emergency period and beyond.