

**Ebola virus disease
preparedness
strengthening team**

***Mauritania country visit
10–16 November 2014***



**World Health
Organization**

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	3
OBJECTIVES	5
TEAM	5
ACTIVITIES	6
PREPAREDNESS EVALUATION.....	11
1. Overall coordination	11
2. Rapid response teams.....	12
STRENGTHS	12
3. Public awareness and community engagement.....	12
STRENGTHS	13
4. Infection prevention and control.....	13
5. Case management	14
STRENGTHS	14
6. Epidemiological surveillance.....	15
STRENGTHS	15
7. Contact tracing.....	16
STRENGTHS	16
8. Laboratory.....	16
Strengths.....	16
9. Capacity at points of entry.....	17
10. Overall budget.....	18
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	18

Executive summary

Given the spread of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic in the subregion, there is a considerable risk that cases will occur in countries that are not currently affected. If there is an adequate level of preparedness, however, the disease can be contained before a major epidemic develops. In this context, WHO responded to a request from the Mauritanian Health Ministry to dispatch an international team on a “preparedness support” mission, between 10 and 14 November 2014. The team met with stakeholders (the Ministry of Health, United Nations agencies, technical and financial partners) at bilateral and multilateral meetings. Field visits, limited to the capital city, enabled the team to observe the efforts that had been made at first hand. A table-top exercise and a review of the WHO consolidated checklist were conducted during a workshop at the WHO Country Office, which was attended by over 50 participants. These activities, in conjunction with the programme of visits, helped to identify the main strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations to improve immediate response capacity for an EVD epidemic. The most urgent of the proposed recommendations are to:

- provide personal protective equipment (PPE) suitable for managing cases of EVD and training in its use;
- bring the Nouakchott Ebola treatment centre into line with the relevant standards;
- establish technical subcommittees of the monitoring unit to develop appropriate procedures;
- raise awareness at community level;
- mobilize partners (including the Red Cross and Red Crescent) for contact tracing and burials;
- ensure that basic hygiene measures (such as hand-washing and wearing gloves) are adopted at all health facilities; and
- plan and implement technical training.

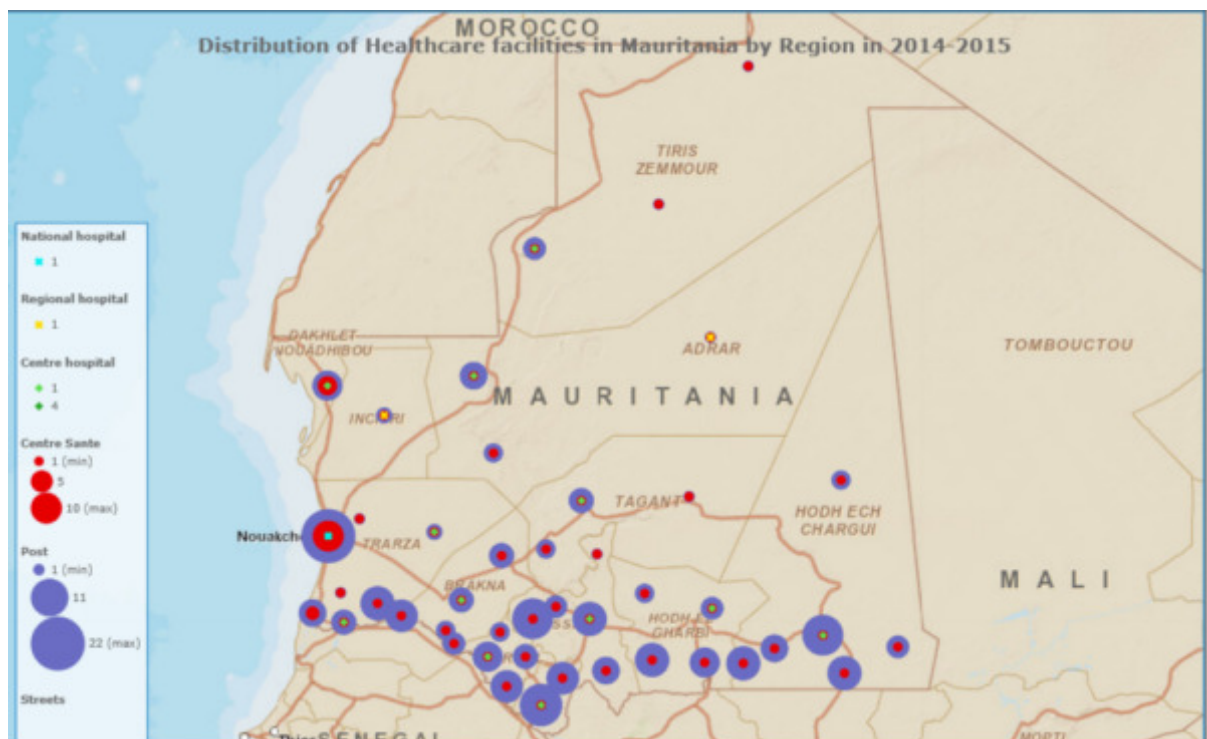
Mobilization of the Ministry of Health and WHO to implement the response plan should be supported directly by technical and financial partners.

Introduction

Mauritania, a country bordering the epicentre of the EVD epidemic, intends to stay free of the disease by preparing for the worst. A WHO team was deployed in November 2014 to assess preparedness efforts made at country level.

Mauritania is located in north-west Africa, covering 1.03 million km² and with a population of 3 335 188 in 2013. It is divided into 12 regions (*wilaya*) and the capital district of Nouakchott, which are subdivided into 55 districts (*moughataa*).

The country's health care infrastructure consists of small health clinics, health centres, departmental and regional hospitals, hospital centres and specialized reference and training centres. There are many private clinics and laboratories, but they are rarely integrated into the surveillance or response activities of the Ministry of Health. The geographical distribution of public health care facilities is shown below.



Surveillance for infectious diseases such as cholera, measles, meningitis, EVD and influenza is conducted through Mauritania's Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) system.

The ongoing EVD outbreak in West Africa poses a considerable risk to all countries in the region. With adequate preparation, introduction of the virus can be contained before a large outbreak develops. So far, EVD has been imported from the three affected countries to five other countries: Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain and the United States.

In August 2014, the WHO Director-General declared the outbreak of EVD a public health emergency of international concern and issued a number of recommendations to control the outbreak in affected countries and prevent and manage its introduction into unaffected countries. The Emergency Committee of the International Health Regulations (2005) urgently recommended that countries that

have land borders with affected countries:

- “urgently establish surveillance for clusters of unexplained fever or deaths due to febrile illness; establish access to a qualified diagnostic laboratory for EVD; ensure that health workers are aware of and trained in appropriate IPC procedures; and establish rapid response teams with the capacity to investigate and manage EVD cases and their contacts”¹ and
- “reinforce preparedness, validate preparation plans and check their state of preparedness through simulations and adequate training of personnel.”²

In addition, the Emergency Committee highlighted the “importance of continued support by WHO and other national and international partners towards the effective implementation and monitoring of these recommendations.”

A consultation between WHO and partners on EVD preparedness and readiness, held in Brazzaville, 8–10 October 2014, agreed on actions to support neighbouring countries unaffected by EVD in strengthening their preparedness in the event of an outbreak. WHO has developed a preparedness strategy for 15 countries to ensure the necessary capacity to manage importation of EVD. One element of this strategy is deployment of international preparedness strengthening teams to assess countries’ current level of preparedness and to plan activities for strengthening the management of EVD.

The mission to Mauritania took place on 10–14 November 2014 in Nouakchott.

Objectives

The immediate objective of the visit was to ensure that Mauritania is as operationally ready as possible to deal with cases of EVD and can effectively and safely detect, investigate and report potential cases, notify them and organize an effective response to prevent the occurrence of a larger outbreak. The mission identified the actions required for timely preparation within 30, 60 and 90 days.

Team

The support team was composed of representatives from WHO Geneva, the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the National Public Health Institute of Quebec (Canada), the WHO Regional Office for Africa and a private logistics consultant. The support team worked with stakeholders at national level (National Public Health Institute, National Public Health Research Institute (INRSP)) and with technical and financial partners in the country (WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Red Cross, Médecins sans Frontières, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United Nations Population Fund).

The members of the mission team were:

Sebastien Cognac (team leader), Laboratory Strengthening and Biorisk Management, WHO

¹ <http://who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/>

² <http://who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-2nd-ihr-meeting/en/>

Amina Benyahia Chaieb (epidemiology and contact tracing), Department of Global Alertness and Response, WHO

Nicolas Isla (epidemiology and contact tracing), Global Health Security Officer, WHO

Cristina Valencia (epidemiology and contact tracing), Fellow of the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control




Timon Marszalek (logistics), consultant, disaster management

Anne Fortin (epidemiology and contact tracing), Director of Public Health, National Institute of Public Health in Quebec

Jocelyne Sauve (epidemiology and contact tracing), Chief of Scientific Unit, National Institute of Public Health in Quebec

Activities

All the activities conducted during the mission are outlined below. See also Annex 1.

Event	Location	Description
Meeting with WHO Representative 	WHO Country Office	Introduction of team and briefing on preparedness measures taken by Mauritania supported by WHO
Briefing with the Director of the United Nations Office in Mauritania 	WHO Country Office	Introduction to mission objectives by WHO Representative and team
Audience with the Minister of Health 	Ministry of Health	The Minister of Health and the Secretary-General of Health welcomed the team. Introduction to mission objectives by WHO Representative

Visit to Nouakchott International Airport



Nouakchott International Airport

The team visited the international airport and met the head physician, who presented the airport's health facilities and procedures for screening, isolation, reporting and patient referral. The airport receives four to eight flights a day from countries including Guinea; the latter have been cancelled since detection of the outbreak. Health staff conduct temperature screening of all passengers on the runway upon disembarkation with a handheld ThermoFlash.

Visit to Ebola treatment centre



Nouakchott suburbs

The team visited the planned Ebola treatment centre (ETC) recently constructed by the Ministry of Health with guidance from WHO and Médecins sans Frontières. The ETC is not yet operational but is designed to isolate and treat all EVD cases in Mauritania. In case of an outbreak, more ETCs will be set up at district and regional levels.

Visit to Port de l'Amitié



Nouakchott port

The team visited the Port de l'Amitié, designed primarily for cargo, and discussed health preparedness measures. Currently, no passenger vessels enter the port. All crew members disembarking from vessels undergo temperature screening by port health authorities. Crews of vessels arriving from affected countries are prohibited from disembarking. Local port authorities who enter vessels are given basic protective equipment.

Visit to INRSP

Abdel Nasser, Nouakchott

The team visited the INRSP and discussed laboratory capacity and procedures for EVD diagnosis. Currently,

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index?reportId=5_27599



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