

Liberia's Ebola Crisis, and Samaritan's Purse's Response

- Liberia is an impoverished West African nation that, before the Ebola virus outbreak, was still recovering from 14 years of civil war.
- Samaritan's Purse has been fighting Ebola since March 2014. Its response has included the deployment of several Canadian staff, including medical personnel, for limited engagements.
- The Ebola outbreak has reached a critical point where:
 - The health care system is crippled, with over 340 health care workers dying from Ebola
 - All of Liberia's schools have been closed for several months, affecting 1.4 million children
 - The Ebola outbreak has damaged an already struggling economy, with food prices increasing 40 percent.
- The current national response, coordinated by the United Nations and the World Health Organization, consists of a three-tiered system:
 1. Take a patient to an Ebola Treatment Unit if one is accessible and has space.
 2. Take a patient to a Community Care Center if one is accessible and has space.
 3. Home-based care, backed by suitable training and equipment, when the other two options are available.
- In early October, Samaritan's Purse sent 100 tons of protective equipment and supplies to Liberia on a Boeing 747 cargo jet, including inflatable tents for the setup of Community Care Centers.
- Two of our 15 planned Community Care Centers are operational, one in Lofa County, and one in River Gee County. These centers are focused on rural areas throughout Liberia that are hardest hit by Ebola, including near the outbreak's epicenter along the border with Guinea. However, because Ebola cases have been found in all of Liberia's 15 counties, it is impossible to construct and operate enough treatment facilities for all Ebola patients throughout Liberia.
- As Liberia's Ministry of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notify our staff of hotspots in our targeted counties, teams are deployed with household intervention kits (to treat Ebola patients) and infection prevention and control kits (to prevent the spread of Ebola). Our aviation department enables us to reach the most isolated communities which often do not have road access.
- Household intervention kits contain a raincoat, rubber boots, mask, goggles, gloves (all reusable after spraying with chlorine-based decontaminant), medications, and disinfectant supplies.
- Infection prevention and control kits include soap, industrial strength gloves, and chlorine.
- Samaritan's Purse has distributed more than 8,200 infection prevention and control kits in River Gee, Lofa, Gbarpolu, Grand Kru, and Monrovia so far.
- Since the outbreak began in March, Samaritan's Purse has reached more than 1.5 million individuals with Ebola prevention messaging.
- In areas with Ebola-infected individuals, our trained national staff meet with the primary caregivers and community leaders, set up an isolation tent (if one is needed), provide body bags for burials, and train households to dig burn pits to dispose of contaminated materials that can't be reused. As part of our training, we offer a poster that clearly and simply shows Liberians how to care for infected family members while protecting themselves. [Here](#). Is the poster, which has been distributed all over Liberia.

About Samaritan's Purse Canada

Samaritan's Purse is a Christian relief and development organization that takes its name from Jesus Christ's biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Like that Good Samaritan, who found a beaten man and helped restore him, we aid victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. Our other initiatives include Operation Christmas Child, which sends gift-filled shoeboxes from caring donors to hurting children worldwide. Learn more at SamaritansPurse.ca.

News Media Inquiries

Jeff Adams
Communications Director
Samaritan's Purse Canada
1.800.663.6500 ext. 8723 or (cell) 403.615.8747
jadams@samaritan.ca