



# Health Watch Weekly Update

## NEWSLETTER

*January 1, 2015*

### **December 31: Ebola death toll rises to 7,890: WHO**

The death toll from the Ebola outbreak in west Africa has risen to 7,890 out of 20,171 cases recorded, the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

Since the previous toll published on Monday, the first confirmed case of Ebola has been diagnosed in Britain. Almost all the deaths and cases have been recorded in the three west African countries worst hit by the outbreak: Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

Those apart, six have died in Mali, one in the United States and eight in Nigeria, which was declared Ebola-free in October. Spain and Senegal, which have both been declared free of Ebola, had one case each, but no deaths.

[The News](#)

### **December 30: New strategy unlikely to curtail refusal against anti-polio vaccine**

A new communication strategy being introduced by United Nations Children Fund to cope with refusal against oral polio vaccine is unlikely to make any breakthrough in eradication of polio in Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to relevant officials.

They said that United Nations Children Fund (Unicef), which was responsible to do away with refusal against OPV, was introducing a new communication strategy for polio eradication in Pakhtun-inhabited areas with focus on increasing 'threat perception' for the low-transmission season starting from January.

The Unicef has been supporting Pakistan's polio eradication programme through mobilisation since 1994, but more than 40,000 parents refuse to administer anti-polio

vaccine to their children in every campaign.

[DAWN](#)

### **December 30: Ebola returns to Europe with first case diagnosed in Britain**

A healthcare worker recently returned from Sierra Leone was diagnosed with Ebola on Monday by doctors in Scotland's largest city.

"A confirmed case of Ebola has been diagnosed in Glasgow," the Scottish government said. The case is the first diagnosis of the deadly virus in Britain during the current outbreak. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed that the patient was a female health worker, and was currently in a stable condition in hospital. The patient returned to Scotland late Sunday via Casablanca and London Heathrow, arriving at Glasgow Airport around 11:30 pm local time (2330 GMT).

[The News](#)

### **December 29: Ebola response by Munir Ahmed**

IN terms of disease-control targeting priorities, infectious diseases top the agenda for all developing countries. As a developing country, Pakistan's public health challenges include dealing with malaria, tuberculosis, measles, diarrhoea and even polio. Given our history of infectious diseases, Pakistan should be doing all it can to prevent any single importation of the Ebola virus turning into a full-blown outbreak.

Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case. We do not appear to have an Ebola focal person or a team responsible for coordinating Ebola preparedness activities which should include provision of personal protective equipment, practical training and standard operating procedures for quarantine and Ebola treatment units.

Inadequate infection control measures in our health systems, poor water and sanitation at the community level and the weak response capacity in our civilian administration structure that has minimal capacity in terms of first responders such as ambulances, trained paramedics, and coordination issues between law enforcement partners, make Ebola preparedness and response planning among the top public health issues for Pakistan.

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### **December 29: Polio campaign postponed in Quetta due to security**

## **threats**

The Balochistan government on Monday postponed an anti-polio campaign in Quetta owing to security threats.

The campaign was scheduled to be launched in the provincial capital from December 29th to administer polio drops to children below the age of five.

"All arrangements were finalised but in the morning the administration told us not to launch the campaign," an officer of the health department told Dawn.com. The Balochistan govt has already declared an emergency to eradicate the crippling virus in the province, which has crossed 20 cases.

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