

## **GLOBAL COMMUNITIES ALERT WEEKLY REPORT**

### **May 31 – June 13, 2015**

### **SUMMARY**

Global Communities is experiencing resistance to safe burials (led by burial teams) in several counties. The main reason given for this resistance is that, since Liberia is free of Ebola, then families no longer need to use the standardized safe burial techniques. Furthermore, community members are expressing distrust in the techniques, such as use of chlorinated water for disinfection. In order to overcome this, Global Communities is forming a messaging plan together with the MOH to be used in selected media and on which ALERT staff and stakeholders will be trained. Global Communities continues to monitor all resistance in order to determine if additional measures must be taken.

Border Surveillance continues to be implemented well; there is some resistance from travelers who refuse to have their temperatures taken or be registered into logbooks. Global Communities is working with all checkpoint staff and local leaders in order to promote discussion around these issues.

A funeral home assessment is ongoing. So far, Global Communities staff has found that there are 33 funeral homes available in all of Liberia (25 in the counties outside Montserrado). Global Communities continues to strategize the best way to engage funeral homes outside Montserrado.

Regular Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) activities continue with little issue; many communities have been triggered and many more have made progress towards becoming Open Defecation Free (ODF). The rainy season is beginning to present some logistical difficulties, such as impassable roads and bridges, but activities are continuing well overall.

## **1. COUNTY-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**

### **1.1 Bong**



Woman leader from Lakpala in Guinea gives update on Border Surveillance during community cluster meeting.

During the reporting period, there was a security minor localized incident between BIN and Guineans in one of the ALERT border communities in Bong. BIN is not accustomed to travelers using the formal crossing points in that area, so BIN installed some personnel in communities near

informal crossing points. A traveler went through the formal crossing point, and then was also questioned near an informal crossing point, which resulted in an altercation. The traveler's arm was broken and 30 Guineans with machetes and guns came to his aid shortly thereafter. ALERT staff is working with the community leaders in that area to diffuse the situation, there will be an all-inclusive community meeting next week specifically to address this issue.

During the reporting period, there was a suspected EVD case at a formal border crossing in Bong. A woman traveling from Guinea was checked at a checkpoint and exhibited some symptoms of EVD. She told the checkpoint staff that she was crossing into Liberia in order to go to a clinic close by, and so checkpoint personnel allowed her to continue (against the border surveillance policy). This also started a trigger, in which relevant persons were notified of the suspected case, so that the situation was monitored, the woman was isolated and later declared EVD-free via two negative tests. The incident shows that, despite a weakness, the rest of the system had the necessary checks to ensure that the case was successfully tracked, and subsequent efforts made to address the weakness with further trainings.

Active border surveillance continues along the Bong-Guinea border in 36 communities in Zota and Panta-Kpaai Districts. During the reporting period, ALERT monitored checkpoints, including verifying that the team is successfully registering travelers in a logbook, checking temperatures, using its Visual Screening form to track down suspected patients and following up appropriately if any issues arise. The program held 10 weekly community cluster meetings, which brings together general town chiefs, town chiefs, elders, women leaders, youth leaders, gCHVs, and stakeholders from Guinea. 442 people attended the meetings in total (350 males, 92 females). The objective of these meetings is to eliminate the spread of Ebola and break the chain of transmission through cross-border coordination.

ALERT staff in Bong County continue to report that informal borders are vulnerable and frequently used by travelers just to avoid the taking of temperature. The BIN commander in Zota District has requested that the program erect additional triages at two major crossing points in Zota, which Global Communities is exploring.

ALERT triggered 8 new CLTS communities during the reporting period, which brings the total number of triggered communities to 34. Staff continue to monitor previously-triggered communities to see the progress that communities are making on their plans. The team observed cleaner communities and progress toward completing CLTS infrastructure, including 165 pits completed or in progress, 157 clotheslines completed and 121 dishracks completed in total in Zota and Panta-Kpaai Districts.

ALERT held 2 District Steering Committee (DSC) meetings in Panta-Kpaai during the reporting period. The meetings included district level leaders, clan chiefs, general town chiefs, town chiefs, a paramount chief and other stakeholders. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss revamping the committee by reinforcing and empowering the DSC and explaining to committee members their roles and responsibilities. The committee also developed and adopted a monitoring plan and community visitation plan that requires personnel to visit each community two times per week, and developed a chain of supervision and reporting. GC district staffs will supervise the process and make recommendations to the DSC and local authorities.

The Boisville Township Commissioner, Edwin K. Dolobak, visited two ALERT communities, Featuah and Waterside. The purpose of the visit was to meet the town chiefs and discuss matters

relating to the CLTS program and find a way to improve the program. He also collected sanitation fines from those who have been refusing to do the work in their communities on working days. His visit was fruitful and seemed to motivate the communities

Rainy season challenges are beginning to affect monitoring, as roads and bridge conditions are deteriorating; staff must walk 1-2 hours to reach some communities. Also, community members are compelled to work on their farms instead of working on CLTS activities. Actions taken to address these challenges include deploying CLTS community development promoters and Natural Leaders to sleep in triggered communities, so as to be in the community first thing in the morning. This also includes going in the field as early as 6:30-7:00 am to meet community dwellers

The Global Communities Bong County team continues to have difficulties obtaining the total number of people buried from the responsible person (part of the County Health Team). As such, no burials were reported during this period. Global Communities is engaging additional people and lobbying to the central MOH in order to hold the responsible persons accountable for this data.

## **1.2 Disco Hill**

ALERT continues to plan the management handover of Disco Hill with MOH and MIA. The relevant parties are holding meetings to discuss management procedures and administrative units that will be in place. Already 3 employees from Disco Hill have been incorporated into the MOH payroll, showing MOH's dedication to this process. ALERT is still developing the 25 acres to ease the transition to MIA management, including clearing the land and diagramming. Planning for a memorial site and monument is ongoing.

Global Communities is also exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships that would make the cemetery sustainable. One potential model would be to engage funeral homes and religious institutions to buy and sell burial plots.

Safe burials are ongoing at Disco Hill. The demographic of bodies buried is shifting to be increasingly unnamed infants/stillborns, individuals under 2 years old (~40%) and unknown adult males. Global Communities is communicating this shift with Government of Liberia, in light of Disco Hill becoming a national monument.

## **1.3 Gbarpolu**

Monitoring of bordering communities along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border in Kongba is ongoing through the triages and community focal people. Global Communities monitored checkpoints and saw that checkpoints are logging travelers and that informal crossing points are being screened by community focal people. During the reporting period, 994 people crossed through formal border crossing points and 1,220 people crossed through informal border points in Kongba district. 1,010 people were overnight guests in the border communities. It is possible that some travelers were double-counted, since people will be counted as they pass through in one direction and then on their way back.

For CLTS activities, Global Communities followed up on the targeted pre-trigger communities: Daniel Village; Alieu Village; Signboard Town; Kortee Village; SLC Camp; Central Bridge; Wango Village; Smith Village; Banana Village; and ULC/Gola Camp.

## 1.4 Grand Cape Mount

During the reporting period, 39,562 people crossed through formal border crossings and 12,696 crossed through informal border crossings in Porkpa and Tewor districts; 3,047 travelers were guests of communities near informal crossings. It is possible that some travelers were double-counted, since people will be counted as they pass through in one direction and then on their way



back. ALERT continued monitoring communities in Tewor and Porkpa district for compliance with border surveillance activities.

During the reporting period, Global Communities hosted a high delegation visit from IMS at the Bo Waterside crossing on both the Liberia and Sierra Leone sides. The delegation included Minister Nyenswah, the CDC, the Global Communities Country Director, the IOM Program Manager, UNICEF, and

others, and met with senior administration and immigration officials in Both Bo Waterside, and in Jendama, Sierra Leone. Global Communities, IOM, and the Red Cross were commended for the level of work being done on this issue.

ALERT also facilitated a cross-border meeting between stakeholders from Liberia and Sierra Leone during the reporting period. Attendees included women's groups, chiefs, the CHT, the MIA and District Commissioners from each side. The main focus of the discussion was on prevention activities to keep the communities safe, such as provision and use of hand washing stations at all homes along bordering communities. Safety issues, such as women's safety with strangers, safe and dignified burials, and safety for Sierra Leonean women caring for patients, were also discussed.

ALERT monitored CLTS triggered communities. 3 villages are putting the finishing touches on 21 latrines, and communities also started building dish racks, clotheslines and garbage pits.

4 burials were reported during this period.

## 1.5 Lofa

Border surveillance continues in Lofa County with distribution of surveillance materials in over 40 communities; monitoring of border communities also continues with MIA and CHT playing key roles. ALERT visited 16 border communities for regular monitoring and to motivate focal point personnel to be vigilant in surveillance activities. Global Communities distributed thermoflash devices, pens, batteries, flashlights and hand washing soap, as needed, during these visits. ALERT also held district and community cluster meetings during the reporting period, in which district leaders acknowledged and encouraged community members to remain vigilant due to new cases of Ebola in both neighboring countries. Management staff visited 3 checkpoints and

observed that travelers are hesitating to wash their hands, but checkpoint staff and security are handling the situations well in discussing the precautions with travelers.

During the reporting period, ALERT conducted pre-triggering exercises for 28 bordering communities and conducted monitoring visits for 20 triggered communities. It also conducted Natural Leaders Network meetings in Kolahun, Voinjama and Quadu Gbondi districts, with 8, 11 and 6 attendees, respectively, during which the Natural Leaders learned their roles and responsibilities and planned for activities.

The Global Communities Lofa County team continues to have difficulties obtaining the total number of people buried from the responsible person (part of the County Health Team). As such, no burials were reported during this period. Global Communities is engaging additional people in order to hold the responsible persons accountable for this data.

## **1.6 Nimba**

ALERT facilitated 3 community engagement meetings for border surveillance with 79 participants from 29 communities during the reporting period. A key discussion during the meetings was the mysterious deaths of a large number of animals, especially goats and sheep. Global Communities advised community members to report these strange deaths to their District Health Officer and District Agriculture Officer. It was also decided that all town criers will announce the deaths, daily, of animals and that no dead animals should be eaten by humans nor be given to another animal as food. Additionally, a team comprising of GC, MIA, CHT and E-health visited Kinnon to take a blood sample from one of the ill sheep to be analyzed in a lab; results are forthcoming.

Local leaders from Leghain and Kulapa bordering towns participated in a cross border meeting in Guinea (Naapa) to discuss rumors about EVD. A total of 5 Liberians and 8 Guineans participated in the meeting. Discussion points included a number of rumors, such as the theory that leaders may have created Ebola for the sake of making a profit; that local fish sellers are poisoning fish and water; and that people should neglect sick family members (which resulted in parents and caregivers to refuse to take their children under 5 to receive the measles vaccine). Guinean leaders agreed to meet with their citizens to dispel the rumors and that Guinean leaders would work together with Liberian leaders in order to build self-confidence in discussing EVD with their citizens.

ALERT staff and local leaders visited 18 border communities and 3 checkpoints for border surveillance monitoring. The screeners were appropriately posted in their various communities and at the checkpoints; ledgers are filled out accurately; and the equipment maintained. Staff observed that the Ganta checkpoint had poor registration due to a big road construction project, which had resulted in removal of the fence and the triage unit. Global Communities is working with BIN to construct a temporary structure until the road construction has moved beyond that point and a more stable structure can be built. Global Communities is engaging local leaders in order to communicate with their citizens the importance of registration, and in particular that it will protect travelers.

CLTS monitoring is ongoing for triggered communities. 12 communities are showing progress, with cleanup campaigns ongoing and the construction of latrines, clotheslines, dish racks, and completion of some family latrines. ALERT also facilitated meetings with local leaders from triggered communities in order to discuss strategies towards becoming ODF; leaders decided

upon an action plan that includes regular monitoring and specific workdays to complete the construction projects. Natural Leaders also met and discussed the need to promote good hygiene in Guinea, particularly so that their Guinean relatives adhere to health regulations. The Natural Leaders are planning to speak one-on-one with Guinean health counterparts and to visit their communities in order to promote best practices.

Challenges to the CLTS process continues to be communities appealing for assistance in constructing their latrines. As a response, ALERT staff encourages those families to speak with families who had already built their latrines with no material or financial assistance and to understand the benefits of building and using latrines.

## 2. CASE MANAGEMENT DATA

### 2.1 Ambulance Support

Current Ambulance Presence			
County	#	County	#
Bomi	2	Margibi	2
Bong	1	Maryland	1
Gbarpolu	2	Montserrado	0
Grand Bassa	2	Nimba	2
Grand Cape Mount	2	Rivercess	1
Grand Gedeh	0	River Gee	0
Grand Kru	1	Sinoe	1
Lofa	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

### 2.2 Burial/Disinfection Team Support

Current Burial/Disinfection Team Support					
County	Burial	Disinfection	County	Burial	Disinfection
Bomi	2	0	Lofa	4	0
Bong	2	0	Margibi	2	0
Disco Hill	6	2	Maryland	1	0
Gbarpolu	2	1	Montserrado	17	8
Grand Bassa	3	0	Nimba	2	0
Grand Cape Mount	3	2	Rivercess	2	0
Grand Gedeh	1	0	River Gee	1	0
Grand Kru	1	0	Sinoe	1	0
			<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>13</b>

Global Communities has started reducing the number of burial teams in all counties; in some cases, the number of burial teams has decreased the number of team members has increased.

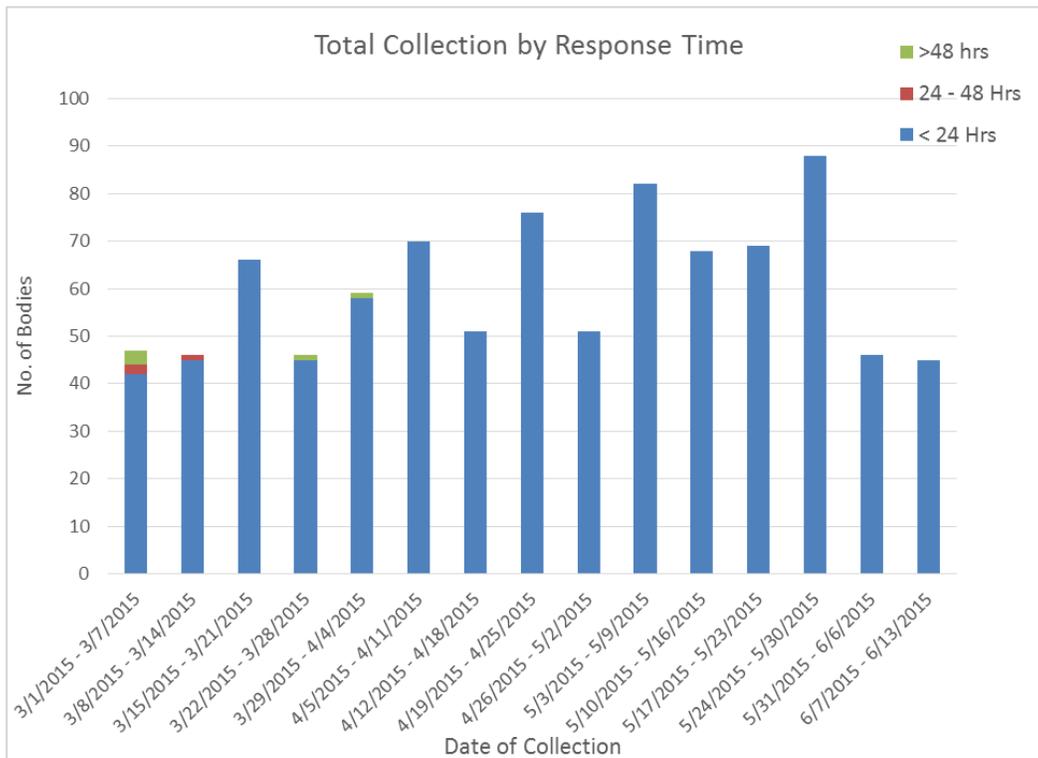
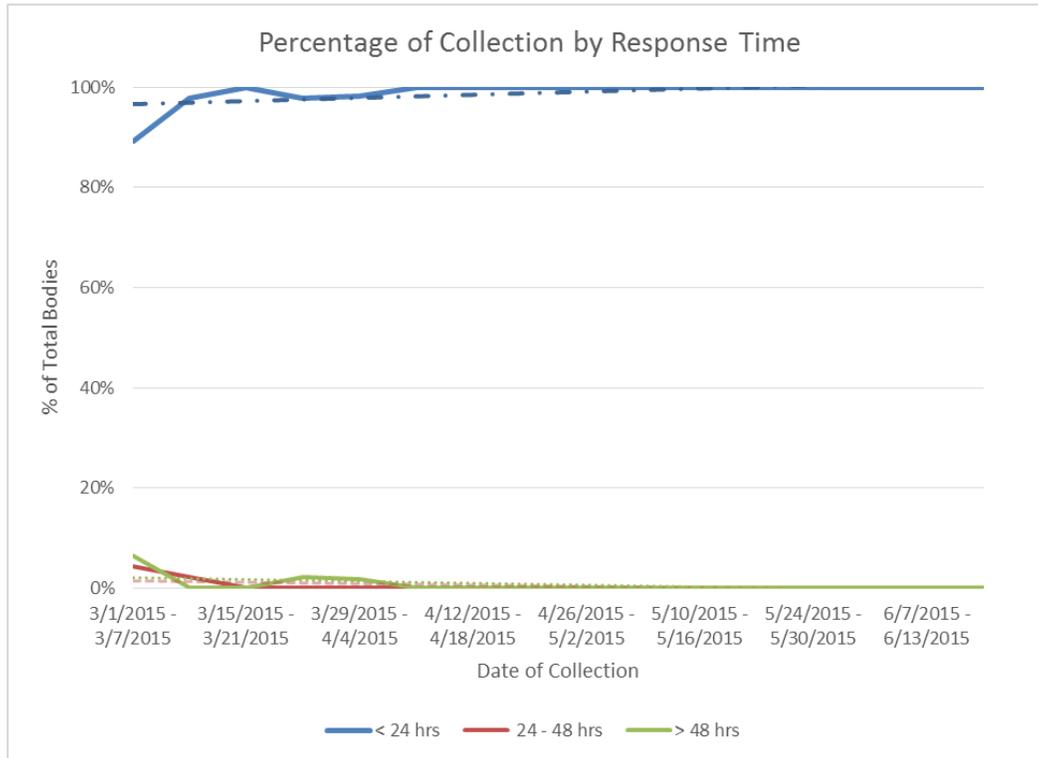
## 2.3 Dead Body Management

### 2.3.1 Overall Burial Statistics

Total Burials Reported May 31 – June 13, 2015			
County	Total	County	Total
Bomi	6	Margibi	14
Bong	0	Maryland	0
Gbarpolu	0	Montserrado	89
Grand Bassa	1	Nimba	1
Grand Cape Mount	4	Rivercess	6
Grand Gedeh	0	River Gee	0
Grand Kru	4	Sinoe	0
Lofa	0	<b>Grand Total</b>	125

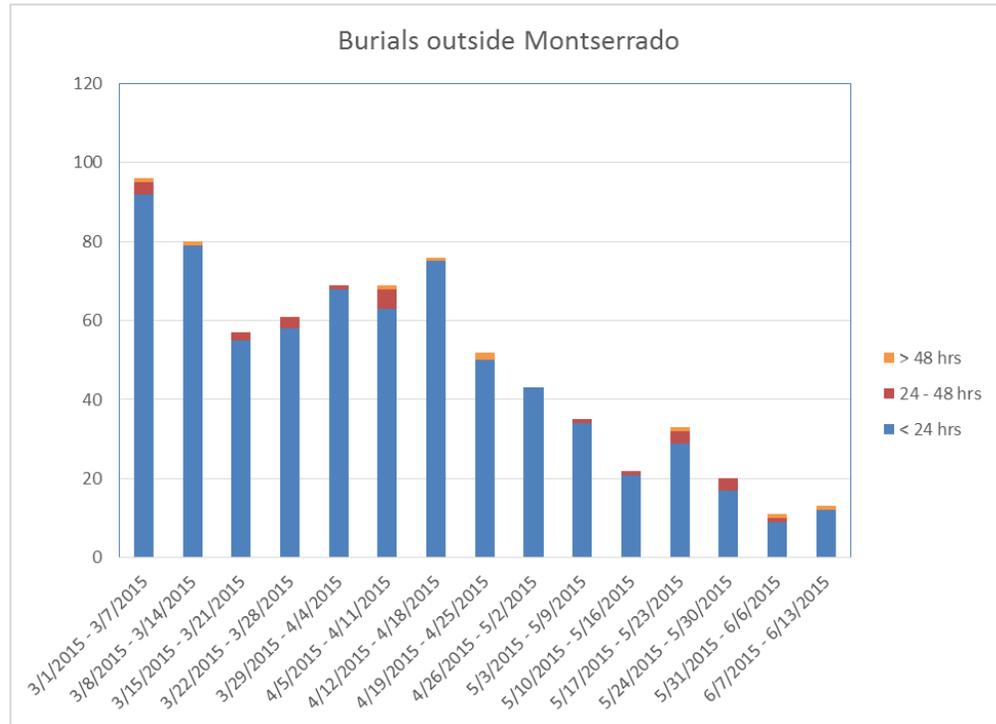
Total Burials Reported May 17 – 30, 2015	
Reported on June 2, 2015	198
Updated Data	216

### 2.3.2 Montserrat County Burial Statistics



91 bodies were buried during the reporting period, of which 100% being buried within 24 hours of death. This trend of 100% burials within 24 hours has continued for nearly 2 months.

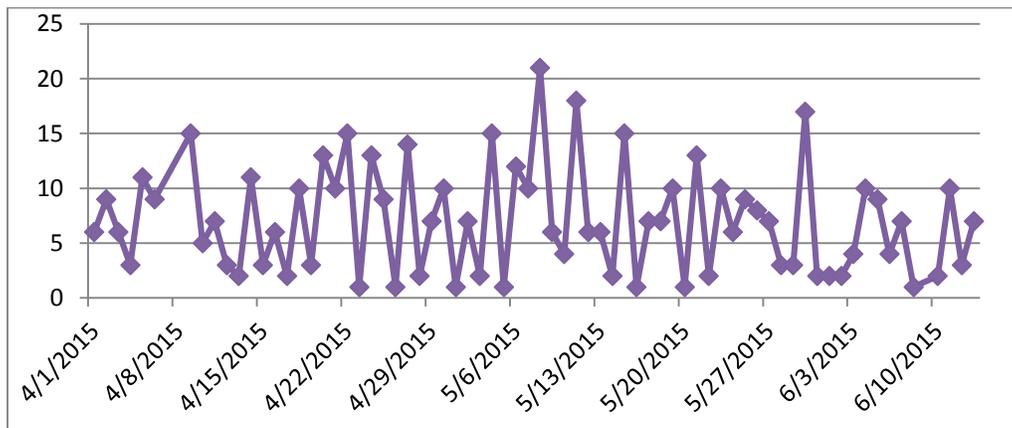
### 2.3.3 Non-Montserrado County Burial Statistics



For all of the burials for which complete data is available, only 3 have been buried after 24 hours of death.

### 2.4 Safe Burial Site

Date	# Buried	By Religion		By Sex			By Point of Origin		
		CH	M	F	M	Unknown	ETU	Community	Hospital
<b>Total</b>	1281	1067	214	494	700	87	117	508	656
<b>Percent</b>	100	83	17	39	55	7	9	40	51



63 bodies were buried at Disco Hill during the reporting period, which was an average of 4.5 bodies per day over the 2-week period. As noted above, the demographic has shifted to become 40% deceased aged 2 and under (520 out of 1281).