



Kenya Tourism Federation

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OUTBREAK OF EBOLA IN WEST AFRICA

Following extensive news coverage in the international media about the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, we are advised by the medical authorities that the situation is as follows:

1. The current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa was first reported in March 2014, and involves Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.
2. Kenya is not affected by the outbreak of Ebola as there has never been any recorded case of Ebola in this country.
3. The affected countries are on the extreme West of the African Continent, thousands of kilometers from Kenya and indeed Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are closer to Madrid, Paris and London than they are to Kenya in East Africa.
4. From Tuesday 18th August Kenya Airways will suspend temporarily all its flights to Liberia and Sierra Leone on the advice of Kenya's Ministry of Health as a measure to prevent the spread of Ebola from those countries until the outbreak there has been brought under control. The Kenya government also announced other restrictions because of the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa and is temporarily suspending entry into Kenya of any passengers who have passed through Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.
5. Travellers from other countries in West Africa can come to Kenya by air just as they can travel at present on flights from West Africa to Europe, America, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. The international airlines have implemented screening for passengers boarding flights in West Africa and the Kenyan Government and Ministry of Health, working in close co-operation with the Kenya Airports Authority, have now set up arrangements at the international airport in Nairobi to screen all passengers arriving on flights from West Africa to prevent any infected person from entering the country and, if required, to provide medical care in an isolation unit.
6. It is considered very unlikely that travellers from the affected countries would come to Kenya overland by road as it could entail a journey of more than 2 weeks and would require driving through places like the Central African Republic, DRC or Southern Sudan where there are serious security issues and disruptions to road travel. Any infected person setting off from West Africa to undertake such a journey by road to Kenya would be very likely to have developed obvious symptoms before arriving at the Kenya border post where screening is now in place to identify and isolate anyone considered to be at risk of carrying the disease so that appropriate medical treatment may be given if required. So the possibility of Ebola spreading overland from the affected countries in West Africa to Kenya is considered extremely unlikely.

7. According to the medical authorities, the overall risk of a traveller or tourist contracting Ebola is very low as it requires direct contact with the bodily fluids or secretions (e.g. blood, saliva, urine, etc) from an infected person exhibiting symptoms or from a dead body. Ebola is not an airborne virus like influenza or tuberculosis, it is not spread by coughing or sneezing and is not present in water or food. Simply washing hands with soap and water can destroy the virus. It should also be noted that infected individuals who have not yet developed symptoms of Ebola cannot transmit the disease to others. It takes time before an infected person develops symptoms of the disease and infected persons become contagious only after the first onset of symptoms. As symptoms worsen, the ability to transmit the virus increases. As a result, patients are usually most likely to infect others at a severe stage of the disease, when they are visibly, and physically, too ill to travel and at that stage they will probably not be physically capable of boarding an aircraft unassisted. The World Health Organization (WHO) is therefore advising against imposing travel bans to and from affected countries. The Director of WHO Global Capacity Alert and Response has stated that because the risk of Ebola transmission on aircraft is so low, WHO does not consider air transport hubs at high risk for further spread of Ebola. The highest Ebola virus level is found in a dead body, according to WHO, so the highest risk of Ebola transmission is in preparing a body for burial. The persons most at risk are those in very close direct contact with infected patients or corpses such as doctors, nurses or mortuary attendants.

8. WHO has clarified that Kenya's Ebola risk profile has not changed, as reported by the media. In a statement, the WHO has commended Kenya for its efforts in putting in place measures to prevent possible importation and to implement early detection and containment if a case is detected in an arriving traveller.

9. Staying in international hotels in Nairobi and at the coastal beach resorts or going on safari to the wildlife parks in Kenya at the present time is considered to entail no risk of contracting Ebola and there is no reason for visitors to cancel or postpone travel plans to Kenya. We will continue to monitor the news bulletins and daily updates from The World Health Organization and Kenya's Ministry of Health to ensure that we are kept informed and can act in the interests of our visitors' safety, which is always our highest priority.



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