

Joint press release by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and the World Health Organization (WHO) on follow-up on the suspected Ebola virus disease case

2 December 2014, Islamabad – The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination in coordination with the National Institute of Health and WHO has sent a four member federal rapid response team consisting of an epidemiologist, laboratory technologist and infectious disease control consultant to undertake an investigation of the suspected Ebola case identified yesterday by Karachi airport authorities and transferred to an appropriate isolation ward at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre.

Although the clinical picture of the patient is much better than upon his arrival, federal and provincial health authorities together with WHO consider it imperative to pursue full compliance with anti-Ebola protocol. Having returned from the city of Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, less than 21 days ago, the patient remains epidemiologically linked with the disease until biologically proven otherwise.

Should the passenger have been identified without any symptoms, he would still have been taken care of by airport health authorities in order to track his travel and contact history, and to be properly informed and advised on the risks of Ebola, but would have been free to remain at home under strict medical supervision. In this case, the patient was symptomatic and his presence at the hospital remains justified.

In this regard, a blood sample has been obtained from the patient, in the presence of the federal rapid response team, under safe conditions, by a trained laboratory technician from the National Institute of Health, Islamabad, and has been safely packaged and shipped for laboratory testing. Results are expected to come back within a week at most.

The federal rapid response team has verified that all sanitary protocols for Ebola control have been adequately carried out, including disinfection of the ambulance and all areas and materials the patient has been in contact with since his arrival in Pakistan, along with the identification of all individuals he has been in contact with.

Provincial and federal health authorities wish to reaffirm the importance of not compromising on Ebola control standards operating procedures, and reiterate their appreciation for the measures and actions taken so far in Karachi by both airport and hospital personnel.

WHO also stresses the importance of pursuing evidence-based messaging, in order to avoid any surge of non-credible or unfounded rumours about the disease.

Finally, WHO wishes to reiterate that there is at the moment no other credible suspicion of Ebola anywhere in Pakistan, other than the case in Karachi.

In this respect, the passenger who entered Pakistan today at Islamabad with a clinical picture of respiratory infection is **not** considered to be a possible suspected Ebola case based on his travel or contact history.

It is important to remember that only passengers who initiated their travel less than 21 days ago from the four Ebola-prone countries (Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone) are subject to Ebola sanitary control measures.

Today's rumour is therefore unfounded as the passenger came from Uganda, an Ebola-free country, more than three months ago. That person suffers from a severe chest infection, an occupational condition in this case.

[Suspected case of Ebola at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi](#)

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