

# UNDERSTANDING CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT: HOW CAN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES HELP?

## Ebola: Health Crisis in West Africa

Ebola virus disease (EVD) is a viral disease that has passed from wild animals to the human population in Central and West Africa. It is characterized by a sudden onset of fever, subsequent internal and external bleeding, and a quick death.

It has a fatality rate of 90 percent. In June 2014, an epidemic of the disease spread to three countries—Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia—with 350 confirmed deaths and probable deaths of almost 600. It takes only one infected person to spread the disease through a village. Due to this rapid transmission, immediate action is required but there are few doctors in the regions where the outbreaks have occurred. There are not sufficient health care treatment facilities where doctors, like the Doctors Without Borders group, can treat victims. They also must take extreme precautions that include wearing protective suits.

Liberia responded by closing its borders and halting trade with Guinea, the source of the initial outbreak, as well as neighboring states Sierra Leone and Senegal. But it was not before the disease crossed into the country. As a result, the Liberian leadership was criticized for not taking the threat seriously enough.\*

An effective response requires cooperation across borders to reach those who are infected and to prevent the disease from spreading. Because of its rapid transmission, digital mappers around the world have worked together to map outbreaks. One nonprofit group,

Map International, is providing infectious disease protective suits needed for doctors to respond. But the disease remains on the move, and no cure is in sight.

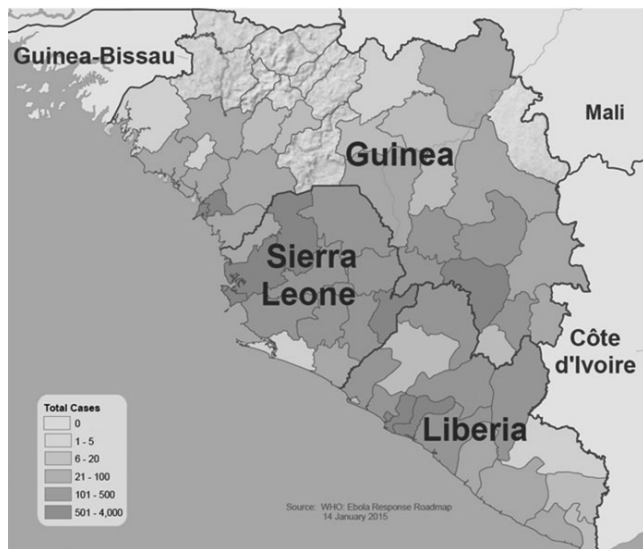
\* AllAfrica, "Liberia: Ebola 'Politics': Urey, Presidency Spar Over Sirleaf's Travel," <http://allafrica.com/stories/201404071639.html>.

What is the role of crossing borders in resolving this crisis? How can the cross-disciplinary focus of international studies help?

### MAP 11.1

## THE EBOLA CRISIS IN WEST AFRICA

### 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa—Outbreak Distribution Map



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa—Outbreak Distribution Map," <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html>.