

Mali On High Alert With New Ebola Cluster

BY BABA AHMED
Associated Press

BAMAKO, Mali — It all started with a sick nurse, whose positive test for Ebola came only after her death. In a busy clinic that treats Mali's elite as well as wounded U.N. peacekeepers, what patient transmitted the virus?

Soon hospital officials were taking a second look at the case of a 70-year-old man who died after being brought to the capital late at night from Guinea suffering from kidney failure. A friend who visited him later died under suspicious circumstances, too.

It wasn't renal disease, they then realized. The 70-year-old man had Ebola and all three of the relatives who brought him to the clinic that night had all since been admitted to an Ebola treatment center back home in Guinea.

On Friday, Malian health authorities went to disinfect the mosque where the 70-year-old's body was prepared for burial — nearly three weeks ago. Already some are criticizing the Malian government for being too slow to react when health authorities had announced his death as a suspected Ebola case earlier in the week.

"It's been 18 days since the Guinean man sick with Ebola died here. It's just too late," said Koumou Keita, his face full of worry.

For nearly a year, Mali had been spared the virus now blamed for killing more than 5,000 people across West Africa despite the fact the country shared a porous land border with Guinea, the country where the epidemic first erupted.

Now there are at least three confirmed Ebola deaths, and two others suspected deaths in Mali's capital, Bamako. Residents here who have seen the horrific death tolls from Ebola in neighboring Guinea now fear the worst.

"I feel uneasy because I have the impression that our authorities are not giving us the whole truth," said Ibrahim Traore, who works at a supermarket in the capital. "There are a lot of things not being said about how the Ebola virus came to Bamako."

Health officials now must try to track down not only family and friends who visited the 70-year-old man at his hospital bed, but also the scores of people who prepared his body for burial and attended his funeral. Teams of investigators are also headed to the border community where au-

thorities believe the Patient Zero in the Bamako cluster — the 70-year-old man — first fell ill.

"The future of Ebola in Mali will depend on the quality of the surveillance of these contacts. If they are rigorously followed, and any subsequent cases are quickly identified and isolated, the battle will be won. But if there are failures in the process, it will lead to further contamination and further problems," said Ibrahima-Soce Fall, Mali's WHO representative.

Among those placed under quarantine are about 20 members of the U.N. peacekeeping force who were treated for battlefield wounds at the Bamako hospital where the dead nurse had worked. The peacekeepers are based in the north of the country, where they are trying to stabilize a vast region where jihadists ruled until a French-led war in 2013.

On Sunday, U.S. health officials said anyone arriving in the U.S. from Mali will be subject to the same screening and monitoring procedures that were ordered last month for travelers from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. That includes taking arriving travelers' temperatures, and questioning them about their health and possible exposure

to the Ebola virus. They also will be asked to provide contact information and to agree to — for 21 days — have daily communications with local health officials who will be asking them to take their temperatures twice each day and monitoring them to see if they develop symptoms.

"At this point we can't be confident that every exposed person has been identified, or that every identified person is being monitored daily," said Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In recent years Mali already has suffered a separatist rebel insurgency, a coup that overthrew its longtime leader and a war against jihadists. Now Ebola threatens to be another source of misery if it is not contained.

"Ebola could cause many deaths here in Mali, said Aminata Samake, who works at a bank in the capital. "We have a tradition of living closely together that could contribute to a huge contamination. Take the example of public transport — you find people crammed into a bus, one on top of the other. Large families share the same plates, even the same glasses for tea."

Cause Of Deadly Leak At Texas Plant Still Unknown

LA PORTE, Texas (AP) — DuPont officials said Sunday it's still not clear what caused a toxic chemical to leak from a valve at a suburban Houston plant, killing four workers and injuring a fifth.

Company spokesman Aaron Woods said DuPont is investigating the cause of the leak of methyl mercaptan at a plant in La Porte. The chemical is used to create crop-protection products such as insecticides and fungicides.

The workers were exposed early Saturday while responding to the leak that started around 4 a.m. and took about two hours to contain. They all were working there as part of their normal shift when the leak happened, Woods said.

The four workers died at the plant and a fifth was transported to a nearby hospital. The injured worker has been released from the hospital.

Woods said company officials are cooperating with local, state and federal authorities in the investigation.

A team from the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, an independent federal agency that investigates industrial chemical accidents, arrived in the Houston area on Sunday to start its probe. The agency said in a news release that five of eight team members planned to receive a briefing from company officials Sunday evening, while the full team will begin work Monday.

Don Holmstrom, director of CSB's

Western Regional Office in Denver, is leading the investigation team along with Investigation Supervisor Johnnie Banks. CSB Managing Director Daniel Horowitz is accompanying the team.

Methyl mercaptan also is used to odorize natural gas — which has no odor — for safety purposes.

The La Porte plant has 320 DuPont employees. Four other companies are also tenants at the complex.

Jeff Suggs, emergency management coordinator for La Porte, said the chemical release was not toxic for those living nearby, but that it caused a smell similar to rotten eggs.

Swanson

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some people didn't fully understand the reason for the road re-naming. One person asked why the tribute and re-naming wasn't focused on a building where he had devoted a great deal of effort.

But winning the lawsuit held special meaning for Rayder, Kim said.

"Rayder worked for years trying to win the battle against the Corps for the flooding," she said. "It started as a small number, and it became a big number because of the years it took in the courts."

Kim Swanson emphasized her late husband didn't hold any personal ill will toward the Corps of Engineers. That was especially true for the local Corps personnel, with whom he held a friendly working relationship, she said.

"He called (Gavins Point Dam operations manager) David Becker and talked to him about things," Kim added.

Rayder held a passion for the flooded area of northern Knox County because of his personal connection to the land now inundated by the Missouri River, Kim said.

"Rayder was born and raised there," she said. "His family stayed living along the river until it was flooded out and they had to move off the bottom land below the (Niobrara) state park. After that, you had to drive a boat through there."

The former farmland has been altered dramatically from the pre-flooding days, Kim said.

"Rayder and I were married in 1976, and they had cattle and hay down there (on the family land)," she said. "Once

the (Missouri River) dams were built, everything changed."

Kim Swanson said her late husband spearheaded the Knox County lawsuit effort. The other Knox County supervisors trusted his knowledge and judgment, even though it was a momentous undertaking.

"Rayder was the person who pushed it because it was his passion for the area and his knowledge of the river issues," she said. "The other supervisors said, 'You go ahead if you think you can do this.'"

Rayder's role as a county supervisor gave him more legal authority than if he had filed a suit as an individual farmer, Kim said.

"It gave him better standing in the fight," she added. Kim said she didn't realize the full importance of her late husband's river knowledge in winning the lawsuit until after his death.

Jim Kube, now a Nebraska judge, was a Norfolk attorney when he represented Knox County in the lawsuit. Kube spoke with Kim Swanson at her husband's wake and spoke of Rayder's crucial background in the litigation.

"Jim Kube said, 'if it wasn't for Rayder, we never would have won that lawsuit,'" Kim said. "Jim said, 'Rayder schooled me on all the history and all the problems (that led to the flooding). We won the lawsuit based on all those facts.'"

Fittingly, part of the Corps judgment/settlement benefited a road in Rayder's home area, Kim said. "Once they won the lawsuit, they raised

and even straightened out a little bit of the road and paved it," she said.

As part of its tribute to Rayder Swanson, the Knox County Board of Supervisors recently passed the resolution renaming 518 Avenue. The re-naming was part of that day's dedication and open house for the \$1.3 million courthouse addition in Center, Neb.

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Braitweit of Norfolk, Neb., donated new signs for Rayder Swanson Road. They own B's Enterprises, selling signs, culverts, steel products and other items.

As part of the renaming ceremony for the stretch of 518 Avenue, Tim Braitweit presented Kim Swanson with a replica of the Rayder Swanson Road sign for the family.

"Without a doubt, it meant a great deal to us," Kim said.

The Knox County Board of Supervisors includes Marty O'Connor of District 1, Patrick Liska of District 2, Virgil Miller of District 3, James Sokol Jr. of District 5, Norman Mackeprang of District 5, Danny Schlote of District 6 and Jim Fuchtmann of District 7.

Swanson's involvement with the Missouri River went beyond his role on the board of supervisors and with the Corps lawsuit. He was particularly concerned about Missouri River sedimentation, including its impact on the northern border of Knox County.

In that respect, Swanson played a key role with the Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition (MSAC). The organization seeks to bring awareness to the impact of

increasing sediment in the river.

Rayder Swanson worked closely with MSAC executive director Sandy (Korkow) Stockholm and other members of the organization, Kim Swanson said. MSAC already held a strong South Dakota presence, and Rayder brought a strong Nebraska connection to the group, Kim added.

Rayder sought to help others in public life without seeking gain, Kim said.

"He was civic minded, humble and willing to talk with people," she said. "He was very knowledgeable of the area."

Perhaps one of the greatest tributes came from an area man who broke into tears at Rayder's funeral, Kim said.

"He told us, there wasn't another person like Rayder, or in that man's memory, had there been another person like Rayder, either," Kim said.

Rayder truly saw each person as a possible friend, Kim said.

"He would always talk to you if there was ever an issue," she said. "If he met you on the street, he knew you. He would tell a joke. He was always happy to see you."

Even toward the end of his life, Rayder remained upbeat and looking out for others, Kim said.

"Rayder never dwelled on the negative," she said. "He worked for the positive and whatever he could do for somebody else."

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New Video Of MH17 Downing Released

HRABOVE, Ukraine (AP) — Four months after Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine, The Associated Press has obtained video that shows how close the burning passenger jet came to hitting village homes and suggests that residents first assumed it was a Ukrainian military plane that had been struck.

The amateur footage, filmed by a resident of Hrabove, shows people reacting in alarm as wreckage blazes only a few meters away from their homes on the afternoon of July 17. The video is perhaps the first taken immediately after the plane came down.

The ultimate cause of the MH17 disaster is the subject of major diplomatic disputes. Ukraine and Western government say Russia-backed separatist fighters fired the rockets that felled the plane, while state-run television in Moscow over the weekend produced evidence it claims places blame with Ukraine's air force.

All 298 people aboard the Boeing 777 flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur were killed when it was shot down over a rebel-held area. Charred remains of the aircraft are scattered around fields over an area of 20 square kilometers (8 square miles).

Workers on Sunday began collecting debris from the crash site, under the supervision of Dutch investigators and officials from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The recovered fragments will be loaded onto trains and taken to the government-controlled eastern city of Kharkiv. The investigation into what happened to MH17 is being conducted there and in the Netherlands.

State Dept. Computer System Hacked

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department has taken the unprecedented step of shutting down its entire unclassified email system as technicians repair possible damage from a suspected hacker attack.

A senior department official said Sunday that "activity of concern" was detected in the system around the same time as a previously reported incident that targeted the White House computer network. That incident was made public in late October, but there was no indication then that the State Department had been affected. Since then, a number of agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service and the National Weather Service, have reported attacks.

The official said none of the State Department's classified systems were affected. However, the official said the department shut down its worldwide email late on Friday as part of a scheduled outage of some of its Internet-linked systems to make security improvements to its main unclassified computer network. The official was not authorized to speak about the matter by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official said the department expects that all of its systems will be operating as normal in the near future, but would not discuss who might be responsible for the breach. Earlier attacks have been blamed on Russian or Chinese attackers, although their origin has never been publicly confirmed.

The State Department is expected to address the shutdown once the security improvements have been completed on Monday or Tuesday.

Confrontations With GOP Await Obama

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — After a productive trip abroad, President Barack Obama headed home Sunday on a collision course with Republicans on immigration and an oil pipeline project, showdowns that threaten prospects for cooperation over his remaining two years in office.

The contentious immigration debate could mean a year-end fight over keeping the government running, if some GOP lawmakers get their way.

On the foreign policy front, there is a Nov. 24 deadline in nuclear negotiations with Iran, and questions are surfacing within the administration about whether to overhaul U.S. policy toward Syria.

Given his faltering political support in the U.S. and his party's recent election losses, his trip to China, Myanmar and Australia appeared to offer respite.

The president, who was due to arrive in Washington late Sunday, basked in policy breakthroughs with China and warm welcomes in Myanmar and Australia.

New Strategies Seek To Curb Violence

NEW YORK (AP) — On a high school football field near Pittsburgh, an assistant coach tackled a topic unrelated to the upcoming game.

"One of the biggest components of being a man is how you treat females," Kevin Murray told his players at Woodland Hills High. "We'd be doing you a very big disservice by not holding you accountable."

At the jailhouse in High Point, North Carolina, a sterner version of that message is now given routinely to men detained for domestic-violence offenses and considered at risk of re-offending.

"We're putting these guys on notice that domestic violence is not going to be tolerated here," said Police Chief Marty Sumner. "The message is very clear: 'We know who you are, we know what you're doing. It has to stop.'"

The two programs target different audiences. But in the realm of domestic-violence prevention, where the record of success is spotty, they share a status as two of the nation's most promising initiatives.

Spy Chief Describes Tense Moments

WASHINGTON (AP) — When U.S. spy chief James Clapper flew to North Korea on a mission to bring home two U.S. captives, he ran into a potential hitch. North Korean officials wanted a diplomatic concession of some sort in return for freeing the men and Clapper had none to offer.

"I think they were disappointed," Clapper said, fleshing out details of the secret trip a week after its completion.

It was not until he was ushered into a hotel room for an "amnesty-granting ceremony" that he knew the release of Americans Kenneth Bae and Matthew Miller would proceed as planned.

All told, the trip unfolded more smoothly than his first foray into North Korean air space, aboard a U.S. helicopter in December 1985.

"They shot at us, and fortunately we made it back to the South," he told CBS's "Face the Nation" in an interview broadcast Sunday. At the time, Clapper was intelligence chief for U.S. forces in South Korea. This time, he was a presidential emissary with a deal in the works and permission to land.

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