

New Sierra Leone Ebola case proves setback in effort to end epidemic

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Health experts in Sierra Leone's northwestern Kambia district are investigating after a woman who died there tested positive for the Ebola. The development came less than a week after the country's last known Ebola patient was discharged from a hospital, a World Health Organization spokeswoman said.

"It's a step back and a disappointment, but it wasn't a surprise as it's near the border with Guinea," where cases remain, said WHO spokeswoman Dr. Margaret Harris, adding that further transmission can be stopped.

Once the source of transmission is found and contacts are traced, a vaccination trial will also begin in the northern Sierra Leone area, Harris said.

Samples from the 67-year-old woman's corpse tested positive for Ebola, WHO technical coordinator Margarete Lamunu said. The woman, who died and was safely buried Aug. 29, was treated at home in Kafta village, so more Ebola cases are expected, Lamunu said.

"We have sent a team to Sella Kafta village and we have already identified ten high-risk contacts that we are focusing on to stem any possible transmission," the National Ebola Response Center's (NERC) communication director Sidi Yahya Tunis said in an interview with a local radio station.

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