

PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF'S

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2015

My fellow Liberians, Good morning!

Today, as we Liberians across this great resilient nation gather with our family and loved ones, I want to wish you a happy and healthy New Year. New Year is always a hopeful moment. As we look back at the end of a very difficult 2014, we do so with the knowledge that we have the capacity and the commitment to each other to reach out for a better and brighter Liberia.

The people of Liberia have made great personal sacrifices in the fight against this Ebola virus disease. As a result of our sacrifices, the numbers of Ebola cases have declined considerably.

The 16 Ebola Treatment Units including the Monrovia Medical Unit for healthcare workers have only 63 patients as of December 28; 42 of which are confirmed cases. Lofa, the former epicenter of the disease, has not reported a case since November 4. Most of the Southeast, including Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Grand Kru have not reported any confirmed cases in many days although ETUs are being brought online to provide care should cases be found in those counties.

I thank each of you, community leaders, Christian and Moslem Community, our civil society and especially our healthcare workers who have been on the frontline with a passionate endurance to this fight. We also want to thank our bilateral and multilateral partners whose support has made the progress possible.

However, I need to let you know that in the last 21 days we have had 131 new cases of the disease. There are 96 confirmed cases with laboratory tests; 58 cases in Montserrado, 20 in Cape Mount, where there is a resurgence and 2 in Nimba where there previously had not been a case for 62 days.

It means that Ebola is still among us. As a result, until and unless we get to zero, we must maintain the same level of intense attention, caution, and prevention practices that helped to get us where we are today.

We must continue to shout loudly through voice and action that Ebola must go because getting rid of Ebola is everybody's business! As we intensify efforts to

move from treatment to prevention; by focusing on the rebuilding and strengthening of our healthcare system through training, better compensation for doctors and healthcare workers; through better equipped health facilities and improved road condition and access to these facilities.

We are pleased that we had a peaceful election on December 20. We congratulate our senators-elect for their victory and ask God's blessings and direction as they prepare or continue to take on the responsibility of national service. We commend the losers for their constructive and peaceful participation in this Victory for Democracy and encourage them to identify other ways in which they can continue to serve their country.

The National Elections Commission deserves our praise for the efficient organization and arrangement of the process. We recognize the role of all political parties, independent candidates, observers, civil society organizations, the media, representatives of the competing interests at the various precincts for their contribution to the process.

We want to pay tribute to our gallant men and women serving in our various state security apparatuses for their loyalty, devotion and commitment to ensure law and order during the entire campaign period and on Election Day. They gave to their country as they had sworn to do so diligently. We appreciate and acknowledge their service to the call of duty.

Although imperfect, the successful results of the polls serve as concrete example to our sub-region, to Africa and the rest of the world that Liberia, a long way from the past, is now symbolizing the first steps of a journey toward democratic maturity.

As we start this New Year, let us begin anew, putting old habits, old grievances and old differences behind us. Let us carry the torch of reconciliation and compromise. It is my prayer that God will guide us in these pursuits.

Have a happy and prosperous New Year. God bless Liberia and save the State.