



**Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Health & Sanitation**

Situation Report No 1			
Activity Name	Wellington Petroleum Tanker Fire Incident	Country affected	Sierra Leone
Date & Time of report	8 th November 2021: 9AM	Activity start date	5 th November 2021
Prepared by	Incident Manger		

Highlights

- Twelve (12) new deaths
 - Connaught hospital = 6
 - Emergency hospital = 2
 - Choithram hospital = 1
 - 34 Military hospital = 3

- **Total victims:** As at 9am on 8th November 2021, **152** people have been reported so far

- **Deaths: 101** people have died from severe acute extensive burns
- **Hospitalizations: 62 people** are currently admitted in 5 city hospitals
 - Connaught hospital = 21
 - Emergency hospital = 19
 - Choithram hospital = 6
 - 34 Military hospital = 13
 - Rokupa Hospital = 3

- **New admissions: 8**
 - Connaught hospital = 4
 - Choithram hospital = 1
 - 34 Military hospital = 3
 - Rokupa hospital = 0
 - Emergency Hospital=0

- **Total discharges (requiring outpatient care): 32**
 - Connaught hospital=28
 - Emergency hospital = 0
 - Choithram hospital = 0
 - 34 Military hospital = 0

 - Rokupa Gov Hospital=4

- **36 patients in critical condition**

- **Discharges against medical advise = 8** (7 From Connaught and 1 from Rokupa)

Situation Overview

During the late evening hours (between 9-10 pm) of 5th November 2021, there was a fire incident due to the explosion of a fuel tanker in Wellington, a community in the populous eastern end of Sierra Leone's capital city Freetown. The incident occurred when a loaded truck hit a loaded fuel tanker leading to leakage of the fuel. The situation caused a heavy traffic hold up in the busy highway that connects the city centre to the eastern part of the city. Scores of people, mostly motorbike taxi riders are reported to have rushed to the scene to fetching fuel that was leaking from the tanker following the collision. While this was happening, with the leaking petroleum tanker surrounded by pedestrians, motor bike riders and motor vehicle traffic, the tanker exploded into a fireball, immediately burning the nearby vehicles, people and neighborhood informal trade structures adjacent to the road.

As at 9am on 8th November 2021, 186 people have been affected by this incident.

Deaths: 111 people have died from severe acute extensive burns

Hospitalizations: 72 people are currently admitted in 5 city hospitals

- Destruction of property, including vehicles, business premises (2 residences of 5 households, 22 vehicles, 48 bike, and 3 tricycles)
- Air pollution
- Destruction of vegetation in the surrounding environment
- Disruption of social and economic life of households within one kilometre from the site (catchment population approx. 35,605)

The government of Sierra Leone on the morning of 6th November 2021 convened an emergency meeting of relevant government agencies, stakeholders and partners to assess the situation, put in place response structures, mobilize support and plan a coordinated response to the incident. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Minister for Health and attended by senior managers and technical staff of MoHS including the Minister of Health. Health sector partners were also present at the emergency meeting including WHO and other health development partners.

An initial rapid assessment is being conducted to establish the extent of the damage and loss of life, account for missing persons, and to identify the capacity of the country to respond. The assessment will also map available resources, identify the gaps/needs, identify the potential consequences from the incident, etc. Medical and psychosocial support teams have been deployed to care for the injured, including clinical staff surge support for the main referral hospital. As additional information is received, the figures indicated above are expected to change because of the critical nature of the injuries that are now being managed in health facilities.

The government is working with stakeholders to conduct an initial rapid assessment, collection of data for registration/ line-listing of the affected (survivors or deceased), estimation and mobilization of immediate needs for trauma care, plus coordination of health sector partners among others.

Coordination of the Response

The Government of Sierra Leone, under the leadership of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) is responsible for overall humanitarian coordination of the response. The Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre (PHNEOC) has been activated to level two (2) to coordinate the public health component of disaster response.

Coordination

- Emergency meeting convened on the 6th November, 2021
- Activation of the National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) to level two (2)
- Incident Management Team (IMT) created
- Daily Incident management meetings
- Initial rapid assessment of the event conducted

Surveillance

- Registration information is being collected to document the affected (injured survivors, dead and dependents).
- Heightened surveillance to actively search for and line-list additional affected people (injured or deceased) that may not have been yet identified or attended to in the health facilities.
- Use of the toll-free 117 telephone line to heighten alert mode from the public

Laboratory and Pathology

- Collection of tissue samples from unrecognized victims for DNA profiling
- Routine lab investigations ongoing for admitted patients
- List of laboratory needs (reagents and consumables) submitted to the IMT
- Blood products available

Case Management & IPC

- Triage and management ongoing
- 72 currently admitted at 5 hospitals
- 36 patients in critical condition

Safe Burials

- Tissue samples collection coordinated with lab from each corpse to allow for DNA testing and post-mortem identification of victims
- Identification of a cemetery for burial (Bolimia Burial Site at Waterloo – Site identified with collaboration and support from FCC)
- Draft communication to the public with regards the dignified and safe burials prepared
- Identification of religious leaders to lead the burial ceremony
- Preparation of grave site ongoing
- **83** unrecognized bodies to be buried today at 3pm.

Food & Nutrition

- Specialized feeding for in-patients ongoing
- Feeding for frontline healthcare workers ongoing
- Special nutritional needs quantified

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- Psychosocial counselling and support for affected families ongoing
- One psychosocial expert has been provided by WHO

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Initial press release published
- Consultations with Inter-religious council initiated

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- Engagement with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) ongoing

Medical Logistics

- Initial drugs and medical consumables sent to all hospitals caring for patients
- Receiving donations of drugs and medical supplies from partners (Multilateral and local)
- Comprehensive needs assessment and gap analysis completed

Challenges and Gaps

- No specialized burns unit across the facilities caring for patients
- Inadequate standby blood supply for large scale casualties available
- Inadequate trauma logistics supplies
- Difficulty in proper identification of victims (burnt beyond recognition)
- Lack of capacity for DNA profiling
- Inadequate technical capacity for burns management, e.g. Clinical dietician, plastic surgeon, physiotherapists, etc.

Recommendations

- Improve specialized burns units
- Initiate a blood donation drive
- Mobilize additional resources for trauma logistics supplies
- Make arrangements for DNA matching at reference laboratory
- Mobilize additional technical capacity for burns management, e.g. clinical dieticians, plastic surgeons, physiotherapists, etc.
- Popularize 117 hotline to the public to report all burns related deaths and injuries daily