

Statement delivered by

**H. E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of Liberia**

On the Lifting of the State of Emergency

November 13, 2014

(As Delivered)

My fellow Liberians:

Since March of this year, our nation has been stricken by an unprecedented outbreak of the deadly Ebola Virus Disease. This outbreak overwhelmed and disrupted the rebuilding of our health system. It also undermined our normal economic, social, cultural and political activities. Many of our fellow citizens became infected and died. Many more died of treatable illnesses as hospitals were shut down and beds were insufficient to treat the infected.

The nation was shaken by this strange and dangerous enemy. Amid the clamor and criticism, we remained calm and undeterred. We acted decisively, closing borders, imposing curfew, ordering quarantines, closing schools, and restricting public gatherings.

As the outbreak progressed, posing a clear and present danger to the State, our neighbors and the rest of the world, we were compelled to declare a State of Emergency and obtained the concurrence of the Legislature in keeping with the Constitution. We took on the fight. We appealed to the world. We appealed to our citizens. Our citizens listened and the world responded.

Today we can all be proud of the progress.

Thus, having consulted relevant stakeholders, the National Health Team and partners, I have informed the leadership of the National Legislature that I will not seek an extension to the State of Emergency. This is not because the fight against Ebola is over.

It is because in our estimation, and that of those with whom we have consulted, the progress we have witnessed, coupled with the various measures and ongoing interventions – all of which can be continuously adopted and sustained under the relevant provisions of the public health law – have combined to re-position our efforts to sustain the fight against the virus until it is finally eradicated from our country.

Today, we can all be proud of the progress we have made, which would have been impossible without the resilient response to our call by all of our citizens, especially our health care workers. In those dark hours, they stood and fought back. From the active identification of cases to improved contact tracing; from the proper management of the outbreak through an Incident Management System to the social mobilization of communities; from the global mobilization of resources, to the strategic support of partners, we continue to fight back and remain thankful to all for the responses we have received.

Notwithstanding these gains, a number of our compatriots are still lying in ETUs, hot-spots are springing up in rural areas, and many of our compatriots are still dying of Ebola. We also know that Liberia cannot

be declared Ebola free until our neighbors are also Ebola free. This means that we cannot let down our guard nor can we afford to reduce our vigilance.

This is why, in keeping with the public health law, and determined to enable the maintenance of the required vigilance, community mobilization and awareness, as well as sustain the gains; until we can start the progressive count down of 21 days, until the national goal of **zero-new-cases** by Christmas is achieved all across the country, we will keep many of the previous measures in place with appropriate adjustments, consistent with the progress in our fight.

Therefore, I am pleased to announce that the curfew is extended to midnight, except those in proximity to hotspots, weekly and border markets are open and school authorities upon immediate passage of the budget will organize young people in communities to start the renovation and clean-up of school facilities in preparation for the opening at a time that will be decided by the progress that we make in this fight.

Finally, my fellow citizens, I am confident that we can win this fight against Ebola. I believe that the resilience and commitment of the people remain strong and resolute in this fight. I believe that our partners will continue to be with us as we move to rebuild our health care delivery system. I believe that the world has shown that they do care.

I believe in the future of our country and the very strong will of our people.

May God bless us all and preserve our great nation.