



NAMIBIA & THE EBOLA SCENARIO

The Ebola pandemic in West Africa has caused media frenzy around the world, resulting in a general loss of perspective with regards to travel to the rest of Africa, especially southern Africa. 'Conservation Travel', a form of responsible travel to conservation orientated destinations such as Namibia, is essential to the sustainability and conservation of such a destination and, in times where world poaching and the general decimation of species worldwide is at an all-time high, a slowdown in Conservation Travel would be a hefty blow to our efforts towards these ideals.

This document is an attempt to equip you, our trade partners, with some facts about Ebola from a Namibian perspective which can be used to educate and convince potential travellers of the implications of their decision over whether to travel or not during the current situation concerning Ebola.

Here are some hard facts:

1. There has never ever been a reported case of the Ebola virus in Namibia, since the virus was first discovered in 1976. Never before, and not now.
2. The Namibian government implemented vigilant screening of all arriving passengers at Windhoek International Airport and at all other major points of entry into the country two months ago when the outbreak in West Africa first hit the news. This process continues and Namibia was one of the first countries worldwide to implement screening of this nature.
3. Most long haul flights from North America, Europe, United Kingdom or Australasia have few stops other than in Johannesburg or Cape Town where screening is also very efficient. These stops tend to be relatively short so travelers coming to Namibia have limited exposure to local people. If guests are concerned about travelling through other African hubs they can take advantage of the direct flights into Windhoek from Germany.
4. Namibia receives no direct flights from West Africa and is far removed from the general travelling routes used by most West Africans.
5. The areas that guests visit in Namibia are remote and usually sparsely populated, with small communities located a long way from each other. Ebola infection is most prominent in heavily populated regions as is the case in West Africa.

6. The most severely affected countries, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have very poor health systems, lacking human and infrastructural resources, having only recently emerged from long periods of conflict and instability. Namibia is an African success story of peace and prosperity. Since its independence nearly 25 years ago, the economy is flourishing with good infrastructure, adequate healthcare services and a stable government. Namibia is rated amongst the top 10 African countries based on its strong and growing GDP per capita, whilst still being the second least densely populated country in the world (after Mongolia), at only 2.6 persons per sq.km. Windhoek is one of the cleanest cities in Africa and, even as the capital city, only has around 350,000 residents.
7. Namibia continues to be a safe, exciting, unique and highly recommended destination to visit – as indicated in a recent Lonely Planet article where Namibia was listed # 2 of the “Best Countries to travel to in the world for 2015” - after Singapore.
8. Namibia’s hot dry climate is not conducive to allowing Ebola to spread easily as the virus cannot survive long in these conditions and it prefers the the more temperate, humid and moist conditions prevalent in equatorial countries.

Some detail on infection

- A) Ebola, unlike influenza or tuberculosis, is NOT airborne and can only be spread through direct contact with infected body fluids (blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids), all very unlikely to happen to the average traveler.
- B) Ebola only spreads through human-to-human transmission via direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, or with surfaces and materials (e.g. bedding, clothing) which has been contaminated with these fluids.
- C) People are only infectious when they exhibit extreme symptoms. First symptoms are the sudden onset of fever, fatigue, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhea, rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding (e.g. oozing from the gums or blood in the stools). A person usually has no symptoms for 2 to 21 days (the “incubation” period) and they are not infectious during that period. The risk of contracting the disease on an aircraft is therefore extremely small as anyone who is ill enough to be infectious usually feels so unwell that they cannot travel. Even if someone infectious were to make it on board having passed the strenuous screening which is currently taking place, others still need to have direct contact with the bodily fluids of that infected person in order to be infected themselves.
- D) Health-care workers, and close family members, who treat and tend infected patients, are most at risk often through close contact with patients when infection control precautions are either not known or not strictly practiced. In West Africa, where there is a tradition of families preparing the bodies of deceased family members for burial, it is often those family

members who contract the disease due to burial procedures where mourners have direct contact with the body of the deceased person.

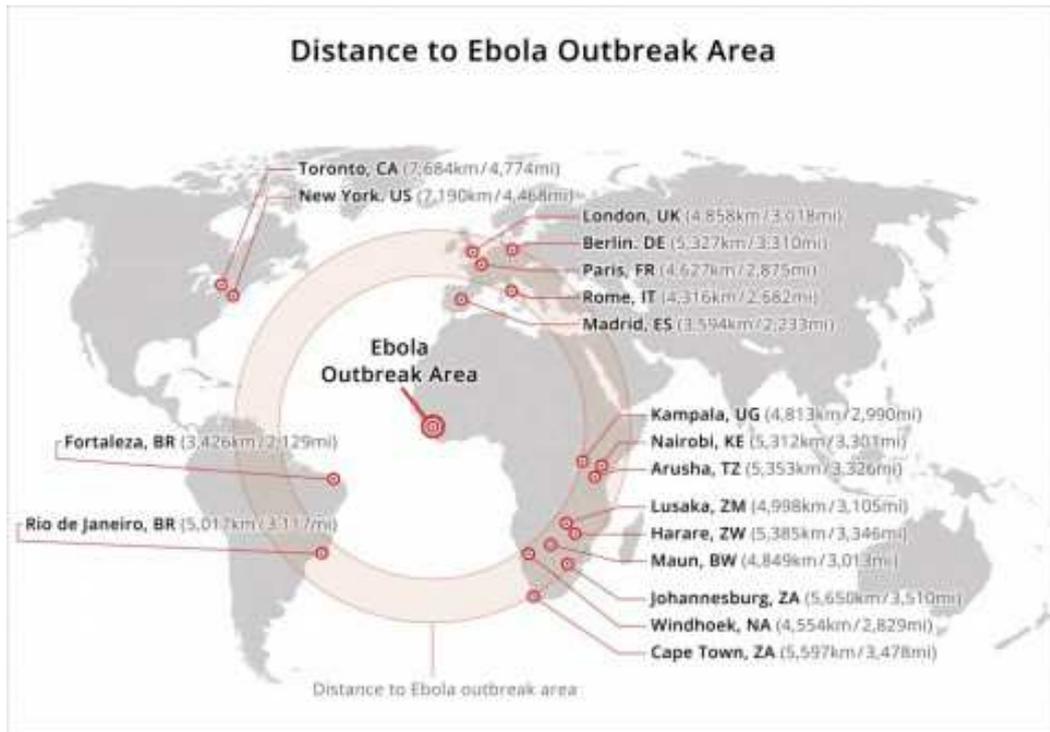
- E) The chances of contracting the disease on international air travel are very slim. In fact, you would have to be almost impossibly unlucky to contract it anywhere outside the main areas of infection in the three tragically afflicted countries of West Africa.

Some perspective

1. A map depicting the sheer size of Africa. Africa is continent with 54 independent countries, each with their own strict immigration and custom laws and controls.



2. A map showing that Namibia is further away from the epicentre of the outbreak than much of southern Europe and South America.



3. A map highlighting the Ebola affected countries on the African continent.

