

London, Gatwick
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**Air Partner winds down Ebola relief work after more than a year as
Sierra Leone is declared Ebola-free**

The weekend of the 7th and 8th November marked a promising milestone in the fight against Ebola, with Sierra Leone being declared Ebola-free by the World Health Organisation and no new cases reported in Guinea – a first since the epidemic broke out in March last year. While the war against the disease is by no means over – tragically, a 15-year-old boy died in Liberia this week less than three months after the country was declared free of the virus – nevertheless, huge progress has been made since the peak of the crisis, when the three worst affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) reported over 700 confirmed, probable, or suspected cases in a single week.

The outbreak has been the most widespread incidence of Ebola in history. Since claiming its first victim, a one-year old Guinean boy, in December 2013, the virus has gone on to kill thousands; the World Health Organisation gives the number of confirmed deaths at around 11,300, but the actual number is believed to be as much as three times higher. The global response has been overwhelming, with billions of dollars pledged to help those both directly and indirectly affected. However, the highly contagious nature of Ebola has made the provision of aid extremely difficult, particularly from a logistical perspective, but Air Partner has been able to use its extensive experience to provide air charters in the face of these highly challenging circumstances.

Air Partner has worked continuously with governments, NGOs and aid agencies since the outbreak to provide the affected regions with vital supplies. Between 26 October 2014 and 11 November 2015 the Freight team operated a total of 128 flights between the UK and Freetown, Sierra Leone, and the Private Jets division is still operating a helicopter on a wet lease to this day. At the peak of the crisis the Group was operating flights every 48 hours carrying cargo of medical equipment and supplies, vehicles, construction materials and protective clothing. On behalf of many of its humanitarian aid and disaster response clients, Air Partner has arranged the air transportation of large quantities of medical equipment and supplies from the United States, Europe and the Middle East to both Sierra Leone and Liberia. Using its extensive network of relationships and working around the clock, the team has been able to secure overflight permits and landing permits to ensure that life-saving supplies were delivered rapidly.

The cargo on these flights has been central to the fight against Ebola; for example, two flights from the UK to Freetown last October carried all the equipment necessary to construct and run a 92 bed treatment facility, including ambulances, tents, generators, air conditioning units and lighting sets. Shipments from the UN World Food Programme have included 14,500kg of blankets, tarpaulins, sleeping pads, water tanks, jerry cans, generators and tents aboard a Boeing B737-400F from Accra in Ghana to Freetown, and a further 15,600kg of aid from Accra to Roberts Airport in Liberia.

The very nature of the crisis has required all involved in the relief effort to be ready for anything at a moment's notice. Air Partner, for instance, was called upon for assistance with a helicopter medivac deployment in Sierra Leone, but the client was unable to definitively inform the team the scope of the mission or even confirm that the helicopter would even be needed. Airlifting medical supplies has also proved particularly problematic, given the exacting environment in which they need to be kept. Air Partner worked closely with a world-leading company that specialises in secure cold chain logistics solutions within the life science industries to implement a process by which temperature sensitive medical supplies were flown to Freetown on a regular basis in temperature controlled units.

Commenting on Air Partner's role in the fight against Ebola, Richard Smith, Air Partner's Director for Freight, said: *"Air Partner has leveraged its emergency aid skills to help get aid to some*

of the areas worst hit by the Ebola crisis. The main advantage of being an international company with a global presence is that our overseas and UK offices are able to work together to find the quickest and most efficient response to situations like this. To date we have flown 3,400 tonnes of aid to West Africa, including 150 ambulances, over 1400 beds and more than a million safety suits. It has been over a year now since we were first called upon to assist with the Ebola relief mission and we are extremely proud to have supported our clients for so long in the battle against this devastating disease.”

Thanks to the combined efforts of organisations around the globe, the Ebola situation today is a world away from this time last year, when the number of infections had been doubling every few weeks. While the disease has not been fully defeated, we are certainly heading in that direction and Guinea and Liberia will hopefully soon join Sierra Leone in looking towards an Ebola-free future. The human toll has been tragically high, but there can be no doubt that without the expertise and dedication of all those involved in the response, the outcome could have been catastrophic.

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About Air Partner

Founded in 1961, Air Partner is a global aviation services group that provides worldwide solutions to industry, commerce, governments and private individuals. The Group is structured into four reporting divisions: Commercial Jets, Private Jets, Freight and Baines Simmons. The Commercial Jet division charters large airliners to move groups of any size. Cabot Aviation, which is formed within the Commercial Jet division, provides comprehensive remarketing programmes for all types of commercial and corporate aircraft to a wide range of international clients. Private Jets offers the company's unique pre-paid JetCard scheme and on-demand charter. Air Partner Freight charters aircraft of every size to fly almost any cargo anywhere, at any time. Baines Simmons is a world leader in Aviation Safety Consulting which specialises in aviation regulation, compliance and safety management. Air Partner is headquartered alongside Gatwick airport in the UK. Air Partner operates 24/7 year-round and has 20 offices globally. Air Partner is listed on the London Stock Exchange (AIR) and is also ISO 9001:2008 compliant for commercial airline and private jet solutions worldwide. www.airpartner.com

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