

## HARNEY COUNTY STANDOFF: DAY 12



AP Photo/Keith Ridler

Ammon Bundy speaks to reporters at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Burns on Thursday.

## Bundy: Meeting between armed group, locals in limbo

By KEITH RIDLER  
Associated Press

BURNS — The leader of an armed group occupying a national wildlife refuge said Thursday a meeting with local residents will happen but it's not clear when and where because the group is struggling to find a place for the gathering.

The group protesting federal land policies had planned to hold a meeting Friday evening in Burns to explain themselves and tell residents when they will leave.

Leader Ammon Bundy told reporters that Harney County officials won't let them use the fairgrounds, as they had hoped.

"It's still in limbo," Bundy said. "We're still going to have it. It's just a matter of when and where."

Officials in Burns, about 30 miles from the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, said the meeting can't be held at the fairgrounds or any other county facility.

On Wednesday, the county fire chief — a sympathizer of the armed group — resigned over the county's refusal to host the meeting.

Chris Briels, a member of the Harney County Committee of Safety, a group of private citizens, announced his resignation

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— Ammon Bundy, Occupier of wildlife refuge

surrounded by cheering anti-government activists.

The safety committee previously asked the armed men to leave town but has now offered to push for local control of federal lands after the occupiers leave.

On Thursday, the Oregon State Sheriff's Association issued a statement in support of Harney County Sheriff David Ward, who has met with Bundy to ask the armed men to leave the refuge.

Bundy has previously said the occupiers would not leave until a plan was in place to turn over federal lands to local authorities. They also want the release of Dwight and Steven Hammond, father-and-son ranchers convicted of arson who returned to prison earlier this month to serve longer sentences.

Federal, state and local law enforcement are monitoring the occupation but have not taken action to remove the armed group.

# WHO declares end to Ebola epidemic

Associated Press

GENEVA — The World Health Organization declared an end to the deadliest Ebola outbreak ever on Thursday after no new cases emerged in Liberia, though health officials warn that it will be several more months before the world is considered free of the disease that claimed more than 11,300 lives over two years.

Thursday's success comes after a harrowing toll: Nearly 23,000 children lost at least one parent or caregiver to the disease. Some 17,000 survivors are trying to resume their lives though many battle mysterious, lingering side effects. Studies continue to uncover new information about how long Ebola can last in bodily fluids.

Liberia, which along with Sierra Leone and Guinea was an epicenter of the latest outbreak, was first declared free of the disease last May, but new cases emerged two times — forcing officials there to restart the clock.

"While this is an important milestone and a very important step forward, we have to say that the job is still not done," said Rick Brennan, WHO director of emergency risk assessment and humanitarian response, at a news conference in Geneva. "That's because there is still ongoing risk of re-emergence of the disease because of persistence of the virus in a proportion of survivors."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the announcement and urged the international community to continue supporting the affected countries so they can respond to any new flare-ups. He said the U.N. "will stand firm with Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the entire region, as they move ahead along the path towards social and economic recovery," his spokesman said.

In Liberia, there was guarded optimism Thursday about reaching the 42-day benchmark with no new cases. The ministry of health is still carrying out Ebola



AP Photo/Abbas Dulleh, File

This 2014 file photo shows a health worker, right, as he sprays a man with disinfectant chemicals as he is suspected of dying due to the Ebola virus as people, rear, look on in Monrovia, Liberia. The World Health Organization on Thursday declared an end to the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa.

tests on dead bodies before burial, and remains on the lookout for any suspicious cases.

Folley Gallah, an ambulance driver who contracted the disease while intervening in an affected community in 2014, welcomed Thursday's news but warned: "We could have a recurrence if we don't do those things that we need to do."

Ebola is spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids of people who are sick or bodies of the dead. A country is considered free of the disease when it has passed two incubation periods of 21 days without any more cases. However, the most recent flare-up in Liberia confounded scientists as it was not initially clear where the new cases had come from.

WHO now says those cases "are likely the result of the virus persisting in survivors even after recovery." Of particular concern is the fact it is now known that Ebola is present in the semen of some male survivors up to a year later. The WHO said Thursday that Ebola can "in rare instances be transmitted to intimate partners."

Before the Ebola epidemic — which is believed to have started in rural Guinea in December

2013 — most of what was known about the disease was limited to studies of much smaller outbreaks in Congo and Uganda. This time, though, the disease made its way to Guinea's capital, then leaped across borders to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Cases also popped up in Mali, Senegal and Nigeria though transmission chains there were quickly shut down.

A Liberian man who traveled to the United States in October 2014 fell ill and died in Texas of Ebola. No other deaths emerged there, though two nurses got sick and the cases sparked panic in the United States.

There is no licensed treatment or vaccine for Ebola, which spread rapidly through the impoverished, crowded neighborhoods of Liberia and Sierra Leone's capitals in particular. Experimental treatments emerged during the outbreak but were limited in supply; those who received supportive care had much higher survival rates but beds at treatment centers initially were hard to come by.

The WHO and others have been roundly criticized for responding too slowly at the beginning of the outbreak, a fumbling that experts say ultimately cost

lives across West Africa.

An Associated Press investigation found the U.N. health agency delayed declaring an international emergency for political and economic reasons. Emails, documents and interviews obtained by the AP show WHO and other responders failed to organize a strong response even after the signal was issued. None of the senior leaders involved in directing the Ebola response has been disciplined or fired.

"I think there's been general acknowledgment that WHO and the international community were slow at the start of this outbreak and there is no question that the disease did get away from us all collectively, and in retrospect there are a number of things that we would have done better and sooner," Brennan said Thursday.

WHO has said that major soul-searching and reforms have taken place as a result.

"I think you will see a much more responsive and effective WHO in future emergencies," he added.

In a promising sign, one experimental vaccine tested on thousands in Guinea seems to work. Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, has said if proven effective, the vaccine will be a "game-changer."

## Police arrest 3 on suspicion of links to Jakarta attack

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesians were shaken but refusing to be cowed a day after a deadly attack in a busy district of central Jakarta that has been claimed by the Islamic State group.

In a new development, police on Friday told an Indonesian TV channel they arrested three men on suspicion of links to the attack that killed seven people including five attackers.

The area near a Starbucks coffee shop where the attack by suicide bombers and gunmen began remained cordoned off with a highly visible police presence Friday.

Onlookers and journalists lingered nearby, with some people leaving flowers and messages of support.

A large screen atop the building that houses the Starbucks displayed messages that said "#prayforjakarta" and "Indonesia Unite."

Newspapers carried bold front-page headlines declaring the country was united in condemnation of the attack, which was the first in Indonesia since 2009.

Depok area police chief Col. Dwiyono told MetroTV that the three men were arrested at dawn at their homes in Depok on the outskirts of Jakarta.

Two civilians were killed in the attack that began Thursday morning, an Indonesian and a Canadian. Another 20 were wounded.

Jakarta police chief Maj. Gen. Tito Karnavian has said the attackers had links with IS and were part of a group led by Bahrum Naim, an Indonesian militant who is now in Syria.

A message shared on Twitter claimed the attack was the work of Islamic State. The message said the attackers had planted several bombs with timers.



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