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One Hundred Thirteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

October 15, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
The Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the Administration works to contain the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic in West Africa and mitigate the risk of further transmission into the United States, every reasonable containment option should be pursued urgently. This includes measures to enhance health system preparedness in the United States, but most critically to contain the outbreak at its source.

Given that, I was deeply concerned to learn that the U.S. Embassies in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are still processing visas for non-U.S. nationals just as they had prior to the Ebola outbreak. It is my understanding that approximately 100 applicants for visas are visiting these three U.S. Embassies each day. Of course, once these individuals are issued a visa by the Embassy, they are free to travel to the United States. Given the critical need to contain this disease at its source, I was surprised that the Department of State has not already exercised its authority to suspend consular services, which is standard procedure in countries experiencing a major security disruption. This would be a prudent measure to mitigate the risk of Ebola exposure and contain its spread – a bedrock principal of health crisis management.

To that end, I would strongly encourage the Department of State to immediately institute a temporary suspension of consular services – particularly the issuance of visas – for non-U.S. nationals in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the West Africa countries most heavily impacted by this outbreak. This is a reasonable and immediately implementable containment measure that may help mitigate the risk of further translocation to the United States, while not impeding the U.S. response to the epidemic.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Royce".

EDWARD R. ROYCE  
Chairman