



**National Covid-19 Emergency
Response Centre (NaCOVERC)**

**Ministry of Health and Sanitation
4th Floor, Youyi Building**

**Joint Press Release
For Immediate Release**

Freetown, 8th December 2021

NaCOVERC and the MoHS wish to inform the public of the following:

1. On 25th November 2021, samples were obtained from inbound passengers, one of which turned out to be positive by PCR for Covid-19.
2. Sequencing result from the positive case further proved to be positive for the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529)
3. The passenger in question had travelled from Nigeria to Sierra Leone on 25th November, 2021
4. It could be recalled that on the 26th of November 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified a new variant, B.1.1.529, as a Variant of Concern and termed it OMICRON.
5. Notwithstanding the detection of Omicron, Delta remains the dominant strain in the world.
6. The occurrence of the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) further underscores the significance of vaccination uptake and general precautionary measures needed to protect the population against COVID-19. Everyone 18 years and older should get vaccinated immediately.
7. NaCOVERC and MoHS (together with partners) are finalizing plans for a third national vaccine surge to further increase uptake. This surge will help intensify vaccine efforts in the Western Area as well as in the Districts bordering Guinea and Liberia.
8. The detection of the first Omicron case demonstrates our unflinching commitment to testing and surveillance, as well as our country's genomic sequencing capabilities.
9. NaCOVERC and MoHS will remain vigilant at points of entry (including the Freetown International Airport). We therefore call on everyone to bear personal responsibility for their health and safety especially at this crucial festive season.

We call on everyone to remain calm and report all suspected cases to 117.

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