

## Dear polio eradication supporter,

Earlier this month, the World Health Organization Director-General [declared](#) the recent international spread of wild poliovirus a “public health emergency of international concern,” and issued Temporary Recommendations to prevent further spread of the disease and [protect progress](#). Compliance with the recommendations is essential to stay ahead of the virus – and countries have begun implementation.

In Pakistan, new polling data indicate that social mobilization campaigns have significantly improved vaccine acceptance rates in high-risk regions of the country. But case counts in North Waziristan continue to rise because of conditions preventing parents from accessing vaccines for their children.

## Countries Protecting Progress through the International Health Regulations



A child in Pakistan receives the oral polio vaccine. © GPEI

Countries have already begun taking measures to implement the Temporary Recommendations under the International Health Regulations (IHR). Pakistan and Cameroon have announced that all travelers will have to show proof of vaccination when leaving the country. Demand for the vaccine in Pakistan [has been strong](#), demonstrated in part by a promotional [social media campaign](#).

Read more about the [IHR recommendations](#).

## Intensified Campaign Schedule Also Protects Progress

To complement these measures, the programme has also proposed an [intensified vaccination campaign schedule](#) in countries which have been identified as at high risk of polio outbreaks. Risk factors include shared borders with infected areas, breakdown of health services in humanitarian emergencies and a history of polio importation. These additional supplementary immunization activities will provide additional protection against outbreaks, as part of a package of risk mitigation strategies which include improving the detection of the polio virus, ensuring vaccination is included in humanitarian response and advocacy with governments.

## Pakistan: Urgent Need for Vaccinator and Social Mobilizer Access in the Final Reservoirs

New [polling data](#) of 2,399 caregivers in the highest risk districts of Pakistan confirms that polio vaccine refusal is down to unprecedented levels, thanks in part to increased social mobilization efforts and the use of innovative communication strategies such as calling illiterate caretakers with educational audio recordings. On average, where vaccinators are able to reach the doorstep, 99% of caregivers in high-risk areas outside of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and 95% of households in FATA report accepting polio vaccine for their children.

But insecurity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and FATA prevents parents from having access to vaccines for their children, which has led to increased case counts. With 66 cases to date this year, the country has seen a more than eight-fold increase compared to this time last year, and nearly 70% of these cases (44) are in FATA's North Waziristan region (see map). In addition, the poll showed that caretakers



**every last child**

### Wild poliovirus in 2014

Global Total: 82 (34) ↑  
Global WPV1: 82(34) ↑  
Global WPV3: 0 (0)

### Endemic: 73 (32) ↑

Afghanistan: 4 (2) ↑  
Nigeria: 3 (22) ↓  
Pakistan: 66 (8) ↑

### Importation Countries: 9 (0) ↑

Equatorial Guinea: 3 (0) ↑  
Iraq: 1 (0) ↑  
Cameroon: 3 (0) ↑  
Syria: 1 (0) ↑  
Ethiopia: 1 (0) ↑

As of 21 May 2014. Numbers in brackets represent data this time in 2013.

### [Current case map](#)

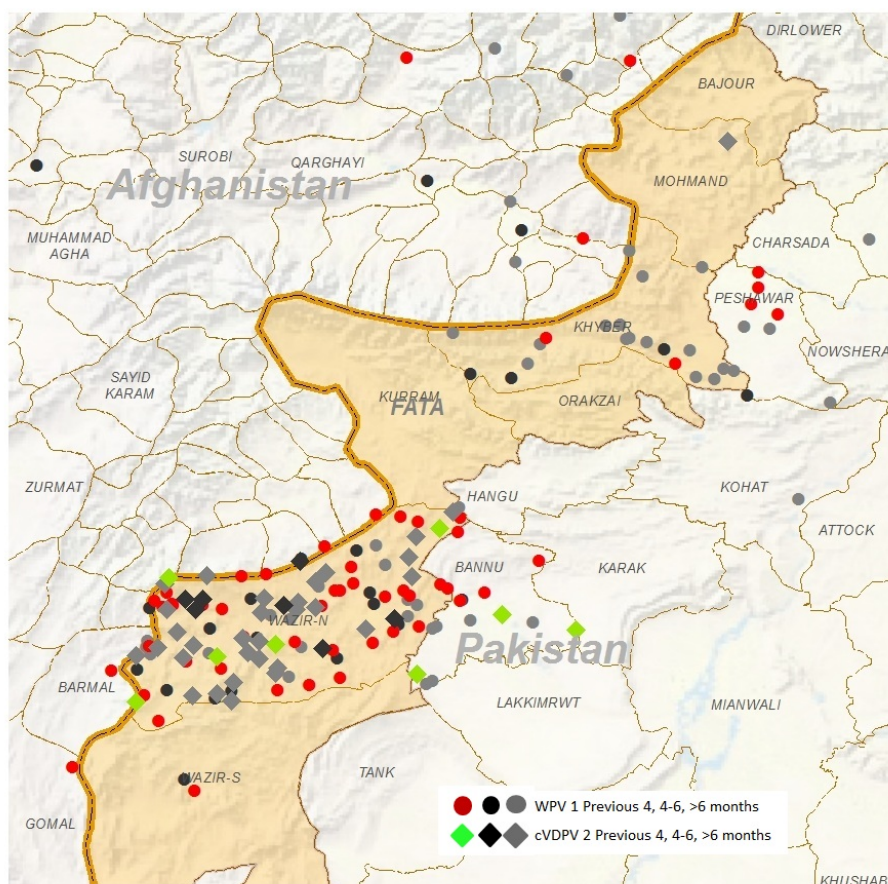
### **Polio at the World Health Assembly:**

At the polio eradication discussion at the World Health Assembly last week, delegations all noted with concern the international spread of polio, and appreciated the Director-General's declaration of a public health emergency of international concern and attendant recommendations to reduce this

in FATA are much more likely to hear and believe negative rumors about the polio vaccine than in other high-risk regions of the country.

The polling data indicates that when vaccinators and social mobilizers can access communities, programs are highly effective at getting the vaccine to children. Inaccessibility in the final reservoirs in Pakistan is the biggest threat to safeguarding the world's investment in polio eradication.

### WPV and cVDPV cases, FATA, 9 April 2013 to 8 April 2014



Source: WHO

spread. The polio-exporting countries of Pakistan and Cameroon outlined the steps they have taken to implement these recommendations. Polio-free countries underlined the need for all countries to remain vigilant and maintain high immunity. At the end of the session, Rotary International called for the sustained commitment necessary to finish the job and deliver a polio-free world.

The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event highlighted progress against polio as one of EPI's greatest achievements.

WHO also held a technical briefing to support countries' plans for the introduction of inactivated polio vaccines in routine immunization systems by the end of 2015.

Check out this [article](#) in *Foreign Policy* by Chris Elias, chairman of the GPEI's Polio Oversight Board and president of global development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on the current state of the polio effort.

#### Funding updates:

The **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** released US\$59 million to WHO and UNICEF for Nigeria.

**Luxembourg** (€250 000) and **ECHO** (US\$1.32 million) have provided specified support for outbreak response activities in Syria to UNICEF.

**Japan** has provided additional funds to UNICEF for polio eradication operations in multiple countries, bringing its 2014 contributions to US\$12.05 million.

Further to Minister Christian Paradis' announcement in April, **Canada** has signed [grant arrangements](#) for C\$20 million for eradication efforts in Afghanistan.

The **National Philanthropic Trust** released US\$25.6 million to UNICEF for global activities.

**UNICEF** allocated US\$17 million from regular resources for polio eradication operations

### Expert Spotlight

How do mobile health units help reach Syrian children? Watch [here](#) to learn how local vaccinators are spreading the news about vaccination campaigns and reaching children in Syria that have been trapped by conflict.

Volunteer vaccinators in Syria working out of a mobile health unit. © UNICEF/2014

