

POLIO NEWS



Dear polio eradication supporter,

As we kick off 2019, polio workers continue their tireless work to reach children everywhere with the lifesaving polio vaccine, to eradicate this scourge once and for all. While the world had hoped to be rid of this disease in 2018, the year saw a number of key milestones to bring us ever closer to that reality. From endorsing the forward-looking Post Certification Strategy to stopping the Syria outbreak, leaders across the globe are working together to root out the virus along borders and safeguard polio-free countries from potential reemergence. As 2018 came to an end, health workers worldwide strategically vaccinated children in hard-to-reach areas, sometimes ahead of schedule, doing whatever it took to keep children protected. With the end of the Endgame Plan 2013-2018, the GPEI is working with stakeholders to present a 2019-2023 strategy to the World Health Assembly. This plan builds on the lessons learned since 2013 and lays out a clear roadmap to achieve global certification and secure a lasting polio-free world once and for all.

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Wild Poliovirus in Numbers



Data as of 30 January 2019, compared to the same point in 2018.

Total for 2018: Global 33, Afghanistan 21, Pakistan 12, Nigeria 0



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2018 in Review

The programme reflects on important progress over the last year in the challenging last mile of polio eradication. 2018 was marked by expanded efforts to reach children with vaccines, the launch of innovative tools and strategies, critical policy decisions and renewed donor commitment to the fight. Learn more about the Global Polio Eradication Initiative’s efforts.

[\[More\]](#)



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WHO Director General’s visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan

The WHO Director General kicked off the new year with visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan, the two countries that reported cases of wild poliovirus in 2018. As new Chair of the Polio Oversight Board, Dr Tedros demonstrated WHO’s commitment to eradication by meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and other high-level government officials from both parties. Read about his trip. [\[More\]](#)



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CIRCULATING VACCINE DERIVED POLIOVIRUS CASES 2019*

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 0 (0)
- Nigeria: 0 (0)
- Somalia: 0 (0)
- Syria: 0 (0)
- Papua New Guinea: 0 (0)
- Niger 0 (0)

More information: [Polio this week](#)

*Data as of 30 January 2019, compared to the same point in 2018. Total for 2018: Global 102, DRC 20, Somalia 12, Mozambique 1, Nigeria 34, PNG 26, Niger 9

POLIO IN THE NEWS

- [The BMJ Opinion](#): Building health security into health systems: one legacy of polio eradication that must not be lost.
- [CSIS](#) (Center for Strategic & International Studies): Rethinking vaccine delivery podcast
- [Wall Street Journal](#): Bill Gates: The best investment I've ever made

FUNDING UPDATES

- **Spain** has provided €50 000 to WHO for polio eradication efforts worldwide.
- **Germany's** extraordinary support to GPEI was reaffirmed in December 2018 through contributions to the three polio endemic countries: €10 million to Afghanistan, €15.5 million to Nigeria and €5 million to Pakistan.
- As a part of its long-term, multi-year commitment to global effort for polio eradication, the Government of **Luxembourg** disbursed €500 000 in 2018.
- The **United Arab Emirates** continues its strong support to polio eradication operations in Pakistan and has contributed US\$ 2 048 934 to the UAE-Pakistan Assistance Programme.
- **Canada** has provided Can\$ 1.5 million to WHO as part of its Can\$ 15 million contribution to polio eradication operations in Afghanistan.

Chairs' Letter to GPEI

In an extraordinary joint statement, the Chairs of the main independent, advisory and oversight committees of the GPEI urge everyone involved in polio eradication to ensure polio will finally be assigned to the history books by 2023. The authors are the chairs of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunization (SAGE), the Independent Monitoring Board, the Emergency Committee of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Regarding International Spread of Poliovirus and the Global Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis (GCC). The statement issues an impassioned plea to everyone to dedicate themselves to one clear objective: to reach that very last child with polio vaccine. [\[More\]](#)

Polio outbreak in Mozambique: A new circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) outbreak has been confirmed in Mozambique. Two genetically-linked circulating cVDPV2 isolates were detected from an acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) case and a healthy community contact. GPEI and partners are supporting the Ministry of Health in planning and implementing an outbreak response. [\[More\]](#)

From smallpox to polio, a life spent pursuing eradication: In the 1970s, Somali epidemiologist Mohamed Shire played a role in the world's successful eradication of smallpox and now works tirelessly to stop the polio virus in his home country. Read his personal account on how he remains committed to ending, hopefully, the second human disease to ever be eradicated. [\[More\]](#)

Preventing outbreaks in Djibouti: Though Djibouti has not had a case of polio since 1999, outbreaks in neighboring countries could still put the country at risk. Read more about Djibouti's efforts to step up its prevention measures and reach 120 000 children with the polio vaccine. [\[More\]](#)

Countries of the Americas confirm commitment against polio: The Americas, the first region to eliminate polio, remains committed to preventing the disease's reintroduction. Read more about the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) sixth regional meeting in Guatemala where leaders discussed improving immunization coverage rates and maintaining high standards to keep the virus out. [\[More\]](#)

Picture of the Month



A young child being vaccinated in Chad. © WHO AFRO

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