

Dear polio eradication supporter,

Africa is closer than ever to eradicating polio, with fewer cases between January and August of 2014 than in any other year in the past decade. Polio cases in Nigeria have dropped almost 90% since 2013 despite the challenge of conducting immunization campaigns amidst conflict in northern areas, and Chad recently celebrated two years of being polio-free. An aggressive response is underway to face the polio risk in central Africa.

In responding to the Ebola outbreak in west Africa, countries are drawing on their polio experience and infrastructure. In Nigeria, for example, the government rapidly established an emergency operations centre modelled on the successful polio experience. In view of the gravity of Ebola outbreak, the program is rescheduling some activities in countries directly affected by Ebola.

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NIGERIA MOVES TOWARD ERADICATION

In the next year Nigeria could cut the number of polio cases to zero, according to Nigeria's Minister of State for Health, Dr. Khaliru Alhassan. Despite continued insecurity in the north, the polio eradication effort has made great strides, resulting in only six cases of polio in 2014 (all but one in Kano State) compared to 43 at the same time last year.

More children in Nigeria are being reached with vaccines due to the provision of health services alongside polio vaccines, improved engagement from religious leaders, and increases in campaign quality. Health workers are providing [primary care](#) services, including treatment for malaria, malnutrition and diarrhoea, alongside the polio vaccine in key regions. The National Traditional Leaders' Committee has continued strong advocacy within their constituencies. Since 2010, 18,000 imams in high-risk areas have received training and information on polio, including messages to include in Friday prayers. And improved campaign quality means the proportion of children who have never been vaccinated against polio is steadily dropping. In June, a dose of inactivated polio vaccine was added to campaigns in parts of Borno and Yobe States to boost immunity among children who had already received oral polio vaccine.

To successfully eradicate polio, Nigeria must maintain strong commitment at all levels of society, particularly among government leaders during the election season.



Mothers wait to get their children vaccinated at the Kachalla comprehensive health centre in Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria.
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INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (IHR)

Since the temporary recommendations for polio-exporting countries were implemented in May, the four polio-exporting countries (Pakistan, Equatorial Guinea, Syria and Cameroon) have taken important steps to vaccinate travellers and implement nationwide immunization activities. For example, Pakistan has established 13 new vaccination sites and vaccinated more than 560,000 travellers, while Equatorial Guinea has created an inter-ministerial crisis management committee chaired by the Prime Minister.

SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

Harvard Polling Data: New study shows [95%](#) of parents in Pakistan want polio workers to vaccinate their children. *Science* publishes [study](#) showing that in children who have already received multiple doses of the oral polio vaccine (OPV), adding a shot of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) is better at boosting immunity than another dose of OPV alone. Based on this research, the GPEI has already conducted IPV campaigns in parts of Nigeria and Kenya.

IN THE NEWS

- *BBC Media Action:* Radio is helping spread information about polio in [Somaliland](#)
- *Leap of Faith:* A [short film](#) sponsored by the UAE government raises awareness of polio vaccination among migrant workers.

CHAD TWO YEARS POLIO-FREE



In June, Chad celebrated [two years](#) of being polio-free, a testament to the government's hard work, focus on underperforming districts, and regular vaccination campaigns. The Government of Chad's Reaching Every District (R.E.D.) campaign has provided resources to districts that need them most. The programme conducted two national campaigns in 2014, protecting an estimated 3.5 million children under-five against this crippling disease.

In the face of continuing risk of poliovirus importation, in May 2014, Chad participated in multi-country campaigns with Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon.

AGGRESSIVE OUTBREAK RESPONSE IN CENTRAL AFRICA AIMS TO REDUCE POLIO SPREAD

Vaccination campaigns and surveillance efforts have increased in [central Africa](#), but polio continues to circulate in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, leaving the region at high risk for spread of the disease.

Two recent polio cases in Cameroon confirm that there are surveillance gaps and polio has spread to new areas of the country. To reduce the risk of further spread, a national immunization campaign was completed in August and several regional campaigns will take place in late August and early September, aiming to cover 100 million children.

Immunization campaigns aimed at creating "buffer zones" are planned for regions in the Central African Republic bordering Cameroon; active searches for cases are one of the ways in which surveillance is being stepped up.



Immunization specialist Dr Deo delivering vaccines to a community in the Central African Republic. © UNICEF/Matas

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild poliovirus in 2014

- Global Total: 149 (214) ↓
- Global WPV1: 149 (214) ↓
- Global WPV3: 0 (0)

Endemic: 131 (72) ↑

- Afghanistan: 8 (4) ↑
- Nigeria: 6 (43) ↓
- Pakistan: 117 (25) ↑

Importation Countries: 18 (142) ↓

- Cameroon: 5 (0) ↑
- Equatorial Guinea: 5 (0) ↑
- Ethiopia: 1 (1)
- Iraq: 2 (0) ↑
- Kenya: 0 (13) ↓
- Somalia: 4 (128) ↓
- Syria: 1 (0) ↑

As of 26 August 2014. Numbers in brackets represent data this time in 2013.

[Current case map](#)

FUNDING UPDATES

- Luxembourg, the second-highest per capita donor to the GPEI, has made a €500 000 contribution to polio eradication operations worldwide.

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