

May 2020 POLIO NEWS



Dear polio eradication supporter,

To help curb the spread of COVID-19, two months ago the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) made the difficult decision to temporarily pause house-to-house immunization campaigns. In line with the <u>latest WHO guidance</u> on implementing mass vaccination campaigns, the GPEI is now <u>recommending</u> that countries with active polio transmission begin preparing to resume immunization activities as soon as conditions are in place to do so safely and adequately. The GPEI has prepared a comprehensive <u>guidance document</u> and will work with countries to carefully ensure that the benefits of carrying out the activity outweigh the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Meanwhile polio health workers around the world continue to provide crucial support to the pandemic response.

Canada pledges support

Furthering its dedication to a polio-free world, Canada recently announced new investments to support polio eradication, helping ensure that every child can access life-saving vaccines. Read why these commitments are just the latest in Canada's



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longstanding partnership in the fight against polio. [More]

Pandemic preparedness in Somalia

As COVID-19 emerged within its borders, Somalia turned to its polio teams for crucial assistance, training thousands of polio frontline workers on COVID-19 surveillance. Learn how years of



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experience tracking polio cases, collecting environmental samples and fostering community trust prepared polio programme teams in Somalia to combat COVID-19. [More]

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 61 (26)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 122 (11)

*Data as of 25 May 2020. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2019.

Breakdown by country Polio this week

POLIO IN THE NEWS

New York Times: Polio and Measles Could Surge After Disruption of Vaccine Programs

Scientific American: Coronavirus
Pandemic Threatens to Derail Polio
Eradication—but There's a Silver
Lining

<u>WIRED</u>: Polio Is Nearly Wiped Out. Covid-19 Could Halt That Progress

New Europe: What we can learn from viruses and our efforts to defeat them

Female health workers strengthen the programme



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"Change won't happen if we don't change the way we think about involving women," says Melissa Corkum. polio programme 'virus chaser' for UNICEF, who has conducted field work from Afghanistan to Nigeria. Corkum's career working side-by-side with local health workers has reinforced her belief that in order to reach every last child with polio must be vaccine, women empowered at all levels. [More]

73rd World Health Assembly

This year's meeting of the <u>73rd World Health Assembly</u> – held virtually for the first time – adopted a resolution of solidarity to fight COVID-19. Reports on <u>polio eradication progress</u> and <u>transition planning</u> are published online.

DONOR UPDATES

WHO extends gratitude to **Canada** for their <u>generous contribution</u> of Can\$ 47.5 million annually over four years to support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's Endgame Strategy.

UNICEF is grateful to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their generous contribution of US\$ 20.3 million. These funds will go to support Pakistan's Community Based Vaccination Programme along with social mobilization and community engagement activities.

UNICEF would like to thank the Rusy and Purviz Shroff Foundation for their generous contribution of US\$ 205 928 to support polio eradication activities in Papua New Guinea.

Picture of the Month



A polio worker administers life-saving polio drops to children in Pakistan during a vaccination campaign held before the COVID-19 pandemic. The GPEI is now recommending that countries with active polio transmission begin preparing to resume immunization activities as soon as conditions are in place to do so safely and adequately. ©WHO/EMRO











