



Dear polio eradication supporter,

In 2021, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is energized to implement new tools and strategies to tackle obstacles facing the eradication effort, including the upcoming rollout of the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) to address cVDPV outbreaks. The year is off to a busy start, with WHO welcoming a new Polio Director and the meeting of the WHO Executive Board, which urged Member States to strengthen their commitment to the fight against polio, particularly given COVID-19's impact on the eradication effort.

WHO's past and present polio directors talk challenges and optimism



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The new WHO Polio Eradication Director, Aiden O'Leary, and his predecessor, Michel Zaffran, spoke with Polio News about overcoming the remaining hurdles to a polio-free world. Both O'Leary and Zaffran are confident in the GPEI's ability to accomplish global eradication through strong partnership, increased integration and implementation of new tools and strategies. [\[More\]](#)

Amid a pandemic, polio is still a priority

This past month at the WHO's Executive Board, global health leaders and minister of health convened to reiterate a collective responsibility to ending polio once and for all. Representatives from the last endemic countries – Pakistan and Afghanistan – made strong commitments to finishing the job while Member States were encouraged to intensify and prioritize polio eradication efforts. Read how these delegates are laying the groundwork for new strategies to address persistent challenges like cVDPVs. [\[More\]](#)



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POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 140 (163)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 959 (276)

*Data as of 20 January 2021. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2019.

Breakdown by country
[Polio this week](#)

POLIO IN THE NEWS

[Al Jazeera](#): Afghanistan launches year's first polio vaccination drive

[Science News](#): A new polio vaccine joins the fight to vanquish the paralyzing disease

[STAT](#): 3 global health issues to watch in 2021

Vaccinating 39 million in Pakistan



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“Our children are like flowers and these anti-polio drives help them grow up healthy and strong,” says Zubair, a polio vaccinator in Pakistan. Since polio immunization campaigns resumed amid COVID-19, health workers have reported that parents in Pakistan are increasingly enthusiastic about vaccinating their children against polio. Follow door-to-door health workers as they travel around communities in Lahore to protect millions of children against polio. [\[More\]](#)

DONOR UPDATES

The World Health Organization thanks the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** for the US\$ 8.5 million provided in supplemental funding for mOPV2 Stockpile Maintenance in 2021.

The WHO extends gratitude to the **National Philanthropic Trust** for the US\$ 9.6 million provided for global outbreak response and technical assistance in Angola and the DRC for the first half of 2021.

Fulfilling part of its Abu Dhabi pledge in November 2019, **Norway** provided 50 million Kroner in flexible funding as part of its 2020 core contribution to WHO. The WHO thanks Norway for its continued commitment to polio eradication.

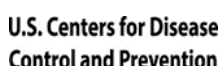
With thanks to **Rotary** and **United Kingdom** funding, Iraq re-started campaigns in December, reaching over 1.7 million children and providing a boost to essential immunization services during the pandemic.

[English](#) | [عربي](#)

Photo of the Month



Health worker Saira Faisal vaccinates a child against polio in Saddar town, Karachi, in August 2020. ©UNICEF/Pakistan



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