Variant type 2 poliovirus detected in Gaza

Recent wastewater samples from Gaza have revealed that variant type 2 poliovirus is circulating in the area. The virus was detected in six wastewater samples, collected from two environmental surveillance sites. While no paralytic cases have been detected, the ongoing conflict has drastically disrupted health services and led to a significant drop in polio vaccination rates, heightening the risk of polio spreading within Gaza. For more context on the situation, check out the op-ed by WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in The Guardian [here]. Additionally, read the interview with UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. [More]

POLIO IN NUMBERS

**Wild Poliovirus in 2024 (2023)**
- **Global Total:** 18 (6)

**Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2024 (2023)**
- **Global Total:** 127 (185)

*Data as of 31 July 2024. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2023.

# POLIO IN THE NEWS

**BBC:** WHO ‘extremely worried’ about possible Gaza polio outbreak.

**Bloomberg:** Poliovirus Traces Detected in Gaza, Raising Fears of Outbreak

**NPR:** Investigators search Gaza for cases of polio after the virus turns up in wastewater

**AFP:** Poliovirus detected in Gaza sewage: Gaza, Israel health ministries.

**WHO polio workers’ heroic response to earthquake**
When a 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck southeastern Afghanistan on 22 June 2022, WHO’s polio workers were among the first to respond. They provided essential medical care, set up temporary clinics, and assisted in rescue efforts. Polio teams, including district polio officers and coordinators, utilized their local knowledge and resources to aid survivors, manage the flow of injured people, and distribute emergency supplies. Their work extended from treating wounds and transporting victims to organizing aid and setting up temporary health services in devastated areas. Read the full story to learn more about these polio workers’ extraordinary efforts.

**Global childhood immunization trends**

New data from the WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage (WUENIC) reveals that global childhood immunization levels stagnated in 2023, with 2.7 million more children un- or under-vaccinated compared to 2019. Affecting all vaccination programs including polio, the increase in unvaccinated children, particularly in conflict-affected areas, underscores the need for persistent and robust immunization campaigns to prevent the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases. Ensuring comprehensive coverage and strengthening healthcare systems remain crucial for achieving a polio-free world. Learn more about this new data [here](https://www.who.int/).
A child is vaccinated against polio. ©GPEI