



Dear polio eradication supporter,

Last month, the next-generation polio vaccine, nOPV2, was granted WHO prequalification – a final stamp of regulatory approval that allows more countries to access and use this [innovative vaccine](#), to stop outbreaks of variant polio. nOPV2 was highlighted at the [WHO Executive Board \(EB\)](#) as well – Member States reiterated the importance of the continued rollout of the new vaccine to combat variant poliovirus. Additionally, Member States noted that the opportunity to eradicate remaining wild poliovirus type 1 transmission remains within reach – but only with intensified efforts from global leaders to reach all children with polio vaccines in Pakistan and Afghanistan. At the WHO EB convenings, delegates thanked current WHO Regional Director for Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ahmed Al Mandhari for his dedication and leadership, and welcomed his successor, Dr Hanan H. Balkhy, who is committed to leading the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region to a polio-free future.

Beating drums to beat polio



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More children are being reached with polio vaccines in Pakistan thanks to a local tradition: drumming. By playing tunes familiar to those living in the Punjab district, health

workers are successfully engaging children and parents alike to spread the message of the importance of vaccination. This intervention is proving as effective as it is fun, as these communities were more receptive when polio teams visited next to deliver drops. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2023 (2022)*

Global Total: 12 (30)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2023 (2022)*

Global Total: 491 (668)

*Data as of 31 January 2024. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2022.

Breakdown by country
[Polio this week](#)

DONOR UPDATES

UNICEF thanks the Government of **Japan** for the contribution of US\$ 3.62 million to procure essential oral polio vaccines for the polio eradication programme in Pakistan.

WHO would like to extend its gratitude to the Government of **Japan** for its flexible thematic funding to the Organization in 2023, US\$ 80 000 of which was allocated to global polio eradication efforts.

WHO would like to thank the Government of **Spain** for a €150 000 contribution and recognize the outstanding political and financial support to polio eradication efforts.

WHO thanks **Canada** for releasing Can\$ 2.5 million as part of its Can\$ 10 million contribution to polio eradication operations in Afghanistan.

A global fight gets global support



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This past month, [Japan announced](#) a US\$ 3.62 million grant to support Pakistan's Polio Programme in procuring the vaccines necessary to stopping wild poliovirus transmission. On the other side

of the globe, Nigeria received US\$ 14 million in [funding from Rotary International](#) to sustain efforts to fight the ongoing

variant polio outbreak. To prevent a global resurgence, it is critical that donors in places without polio continue to support eradication, and we are immensely grateful to our historical partners at Rotary and in Japan, who recognize that polio anywhere is a threat to children everywhere.



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POLIO IN THE NEWS

[Les Echos](#): Bill Gates: "Faced with the climate challenge, innovation is the only hope".

[Voices of America](#): Taliban Minister Boasts Afghan Anti-Polio Gains While Addressing Global Health Huddle

[Project Syndicate](#): Lessons from Lower-Income Countries' COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

[Health Policy and Planning](#): Leveraging global investments for polio eradication to strengthen health systems' resilience through transition.

Preventing more than just polio

Today, polio persists in places facing complex health crises. Recognizing how polio overlaps with many other issues, the GPEI has begun using its reach and resources to deliver other essential care alongside polio drops. Thanks to this effort, zero-dose children in Pakistan, Nigeria and Somalia are now receiving vaccines that will protect them from preventable diseases. Read more about the other ways polio eradication efforts are strengthening health systems on the [GPEI website](#).



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Photo of the Month



Zafar, the drummer, uses his rhythmic beats to attract a crowd of children and adults to share information about the upcoming polio campaign, in a neighborhood in Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan. ©UNICEF/Pakistan