



Dear polio eradication supporter,

As we close out a year marked by COVID-19, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is reflecting upon both the immense challenges faced and the incredible ways that the polio programme has stepped up in 2020. From supporting pandemic response efforts and relaunching polio vaccination campaigns to kickstarting new initiatives like the [emergency call to action](#), the programme continues to work to overcome obstacles. Looking to 2021, the GPEI is delighted to welcome a new Director of Polio Eradication at the WHO, Mr Aidan O’Leary. Next year will also bring new efforts to help us reach a polio-free world, including rolling out novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) to help fight cVDPV2 and redoubling outbreak response efforts to tackle poliovirus spread.

### Welcoming the new WHO Director of Polio Eradication



“I’m excited to join this incredible programme,” says Mr Aidan O’Leary, who will assume his new role in January 2021. Mr O’Leary comes to the GPEI with years of experience working in global health and emergency response, including holding leading roles at UN OCHA in Yemen, Iraq, Syria and

Afghanistan and serving as UNICEF’s Chief of Polio Eradication in Pakistan. From building out new strategies to implementing new tools, read more about what Mr O’Leary plans to focus on in the coming year. [\[More\]](#)

### Resumed campaigns in Africa vaccinate millions

Over 40 million children across 16 African countries have been protected against polio since mid-July, when polio immunization activities resumed following a necessary pause due to COVID-19. Learn why even after achieving wild polio-free certification in August, strong immunization campaigns remain critical. [\[More\]](#)



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### POLIO IN NUMBERS

#### Wild Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)\*

Global Total: 138 (125)

#### Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)\*

Global Total: 844 (246)

\*Data as of 16 December 2020. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2019.

Breakdown by country  
[Polio this week](#)

### POLIO IN THE NEWS

[Forbes](#): A Tale Of Two Crises And The Solutions That Bind Them: Wild Polio And COVID-19

[Project Syndicate](#): The Secret of Pakistan’s COVID-19 Success

[The Telegraph](#): New polio vaccine that targets mutated virus is safe and effective, research shows

## United Kingdom steps up for polio eradication

The United Kingdom has announced a £30 million increase in the first payment of its 2019 – 2023 pledge to the GPEI, helping the programme maintain the fight against polio and close the immunity gaps that have emerged amid the pandemic. See why strong donor commitment is vital to end polio as well as strengthen response to all kinds of health emergencies, including COVID-19. [\[More\]](#)



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## DONOR UPDATES

The World Health Organization thanks the **United Kingdom** for [agreeing a £30 million increase](#) to the first payment of their 2019 – 2023 pledge, meaning that the total amount released for polio eradication activities is £70 million.

The WHO extends gratitude to **Germany** for contributing €5 million to polio eradication operations in Pakistan. These funds will help the programme respond to challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to **all donors** who contributed to polio eradication in 2020. This support is critical to ensure that challenges are overcome and the goal of a polio-free world is reached.

## Women Leaders in Polio Eradication: Jawahir Habib



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From supporting women as the leader of a small team in Quetta, to training and deploying a workforce of 3500 Community Based Workers to reach missed children, UNICEF Programme Officer Jawahir Habib explains why her work in Pakistan has convinced her that polio eradication is

a tool for social change. [\[More\]](#)

## Photo of the Month



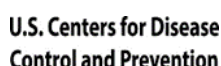
Twin brothers, Habib-u Rahman and Hamid-u Rahman, and their niece, show their inked fingers after being vaccinated against polio in Botawar village, Rukha district of Panjshir province, during the November 2020 campaign in Afghanistan. [\[More\]](#) © WHO Afghanistan/ Ahmadullah Amarkhil



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