



Dear polio eradication supporter,

Commitment and a sense of community continue to define the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, from the highest decision-making bodies to frontline health workers around the world. This month, the UN Secretary-General, WHO Executive Board Member States and Rapid Response Teams working across borders demonstrated these values, including by endorsing new strategies to intensify outbreak response, and by helping supply health workers with the resources needed to reach every last child. From global to local action, our shared vision of a polio-free world unites us as we work to overcome challenges and outsmart the virus.

UN Secretary-General backs polio eradication

On a trip to Pakistan, UN Secretary-General António Guterres vaccinated children in Lahore during a nationwide campaign aiming to protect some 39 million children from polio. Thanking the Government of



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Pakistan and recognising the brave efforts of health workers, Guterres reiterated that polio eradication is a priority of the United Nations and called on all leaders to help end polio for good. [\[More\]](#)

A new plan to curb outbreaks



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Following last year's increase in circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) outbreaks, the Member States of the WHO Executive Board overwhelmingly endorsed a new type 2 cVDPV control strategy. The plan outlines tactics to strengthen outbreak response and improve surveillance in affected and at-risk countries. It also accelerates the potential roll-out of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) – a brand new tool to address outbreaks – as early as mid-2020 under WHO's Emergency Use Listing process. [\[More\]](#)

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POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 17 (9)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2020 (2019)*

Global Total: 8 (6)

*Data as of 19 February 2020. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2019.

Breakdown by country
[Polio this week](#)

POLIO IN THE NEWS

[Rotary](#): International delegation of Rotary leaders visits Pakistan in support of polio eradication

[The Lancet](#): Why is polio still here? A perspective from Pakistan

[Forbes](#): Want To Stop An Epidemic? Start With The Facts

[The Rotarian](#): Bill Gates answers four questions about working with Rotary to eradicate polio

Inside Rapid Response

Working in WHO AFRO's Rapid Response Team, experts in vaccination management, epidemiology and communications coordinate the response to cVDPV outbreaks affecting countries across Africa. Get a behind-the-scenes look at how the Rapid Response Team operates – travelling as soon as the first lab confirmation of cases is received to support emergency response vaccination campaigns. [\[More\]](#)



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Gender in Polio Eradication

Next month the polio programme will mark **International Women's Day** and the 25th Anniversary of Beijing during this year's **Commission on the Status of Women**. These events provide an opportunity to highlight the role of gender in polio eradication and amplify the voices of women working to end polio worldwide. For more information on the links between polio eradication and gender, please visit the [Gender section](#) of our website.



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Picture of the Month



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres vaccinates a child at a school in Lahore during the February nationwide polio campaign.

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DONOR UPDATES

- Thank you to the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** for contributing US\$ 3 million for the Stop Transmission of Polio (STOP) Program, which deploys public health professionals with polio eradication expertise to support national health systems.
- Thank you to the **Japan International Cooperation Agency** and the **Government of Japan** for contributing US\$ 3.3 million to support the upgrade of Pakistan's Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio. Japan's assistance has helped procure essential molecular-biology equipment for the laboratory, boosting Pakistan's capacity to swiftly track and respond to the poliovirus.
- This month, Members of the European Parliament gathered for the first session of the European Parliament Interest Group on Global Public Health and Development, to speak about polio eradication as a critical global health challenge. The programme would like to thank **Rasa Juknevičienė** MEP for convening the group, and representation from the **Croatian Presidency of the European Council** and the **European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development** for speaking in support of polio eradication efforts.