



Dear polio eradication supporter,

On the eve of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) Final, [Speak Up Africa](#) convened football leaders and global health champions to rally Africa to end polio and malaria. Footballer Luís Figo underscored the critical need to protect children from preventable diseases, polio survivor and football coach from Chad, Abakar Moussa Kalle, delivered a powerful testimony on the life-changing importance of vaccination, and pro breakdancer, Junior Bosila Banya, shared an inspiring speech and artistic dance performance. Throughout AFCON, renowned African footballers also teamed up with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) for the [Kick Out Polio campaign](#), where they called on government leaders, families, and communities, to step up efforts to vaccinate every child against polio. With champions like these raising their voices, we can accelerate progress to end polio in Africa and around the world.

New Commitment from Alwaleed Philanthropies



The GPEI welcomed a new US\$ 15 million pledge from Alwaleed Philanthropies Global, announced by Bill Gates, Chair of the Gates Foundation, and HRH Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud, Secretary General of Alwaleed Philanthropies, at the World Economic Forum in Davos. This multi-year contribution, committed through Gates Philanthropy Partners, will strengthen vaccination and surveillance activities, helping the program protect more children in the hardest-to-reach areas of the world. Learn more about how this contribution will help accelerate eradication efforts. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN THE NEWS

Hindustan Times: [India stopped polio 15 years ago; now it can end polio everywhere](#)

Arab News: [Alwaleed Philanthropies allocates \\$15 million for global polio eradication efforts](#)

The Guardian: [‘I wasn’t allowed to study, but I will make sure no girl in this village hears those same words’](#)

Gulf News: [UAE doubles down on saving lives with new global push for mothers, children and neglected diseases](#)

Arab News: [Pakistan to target over 45 million children in first anti-polio drive of 2026](#)

Reaching Children in Pakistan

In Pakistan, new child-friendly vaccination points are helping reach missed children with lifesaving vaccines. The Immunity Express initiative is complimenting



house-to-house vaccinations by establishing visible, fun, vaccination points, that resemble community fairs. In April and May 2025, 468 previously missed children were successfully vaccinated through this complementary community outreach approach. Learn more about this exciting initiative. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2026 (2025)*

Global Total: 0 (41)

Circulating Variant (Vaccine Derived) Poliovirus in 2026 (2025)*

Global Total: 0 (222)

*Data as of 27 January 2026. Numbers in brackets represent global data in 2025.

**Breakdown by country
Polio this week**

Ethiopia Delivers Over 26 Million Vaccines to Children



Ethiopia's national polio vaccination campaign marked a major milestone, reaching more than 26 million children across all regions with lifesaving polio vaccines. To strengthen population immunity against the virus, the campaign co-administered bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) with the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2). This vaccination strategy will help close immunity gaps and accelerate progress towards ending variant polio transmission across the country. [\[More\]](#)

DONOR UPDATES

GPEI partners thank **Alwaleed Philanthropies Global** for their 3-year US\$ 15 million commitment to support frontline vaccination campaigns, disease surveillance, and rapid outbreak response, helping the programme reach children in the most fragile and conflict-affected settings.

WHO thanks the **Gates Foundation** for the generous contribution of US\$ 60 million to support polio outbreak response campaigns in 2026.

UNICEF warmly thanks the Government of the **Republic of Korea** for its generous additional US\$ 1 million contribution to the GPEI, helping stop poliovirus transmission and prevent outbreaks by strengthening outbreak response, vaccine delivery, community engagement, and surveillance toward a polio-free future.

Photo of the Month



Through child-friendly outreach with Immunity Express, a child in Pakistan is vaccinated.
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