



Dear polio eradication supporter,

This month, at the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, Member States sent a clear message: ending polio remains a shared commitment against a backdrop of shifting global health priorities—including the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Across formal sessions, side events, and bilateral meetings, Member States acknowledged that eradication is closer than ever, while recognizing that the final push will require continued political commitment, operational focus, and reliable funding to reach every remaining child.

On the sidelines, ministers from six countries in the Horn of Africa and Yemen pledged to stop variant poliovirus transmission by the [end of 2027](#), and GPEI partners joined an International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies-hosted side event on health services in fragile settings, where Polio Oversight Board Chair Michael McGovern [spoke](#) to how polio infrastructure extends life-saving services to the world's hardest-to-reach communities. WHO also [called on](#) Member States to press for greater access in northern Yemen, where an active polio outbreak has paralyzed 450 children. The week was a powerful reminder that, even amid conflict and converging global health crises, polio eradication remains, in the words of Rotary's Judith Diment, '[one of the few remaining examples of a truly universal humanitarian cause](#),' and the finish line is in sight.

Rebuilding Confidence in Vaccination in Benin

In Benin, community health workers are restoring trust in vaccination, one conversation at a time. After years of misinformation and hesitancy, dedicated outreach workers are engaging families directly, listening to their concerns and sharing



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clear, trusted information about the benefits of childhood vaccines. In 2025, Benin carried out a polio vaccination campaign that reached over 2.4 million

children, thanks in part to the work of these 'refusal managers'. Read about how trust is being restored and why it matters for eradication. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2026 (2025)*

Global Total: 7 (12)

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

Global Total: 61 (55)

*Data as of 26 May 2026. Numbers in brackets represent data this time in 2025.

Breakdown by country
Polio this week

From the Final Cases to the Finish Line



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WHO Polio Director Dr Arshad Qudus took to the *UN newSpecial* to examine where the global polio eradication effort stands today and what it will take to finish the job. With wild poliovirus now endemic in only two countries and variant outbreaks a continued reminder that no child is

safe until polio is gone everywhere, the piece makes the case for sustained political commitment through the final stretch and highlights the health workers, communities, and partners who have brought the world to this critical moment. Read the full feature at May 2026 issue on p.18. [[newSpecial](#)]

POLIO IN THE NEWS

Arab News: [Pakistan vaccinates 15.9 million children in first three days of week-long anti-polio drive](#)

LBC: [The fight against polio is almost won. Funding cuts come at the worst possible moment](#)

Egypt Today: [How Egypt succeeded in containing infectious diseases after vaccinating more than 99% of children](#)

Forbes: [What The IFANCA-UNICEF Partnership Reveals About High-Impact Giving](#)

In Nigeria, Lessons from Polio Are Strengthening Routine Immunization



Courtesy Gavi; © Jesusegun Alagbe

In Sokoto, Nigeria, the infrastructure and expertise built through decades of polio campaigns are now helping protect children against a wider range of diseases. From community mapping to trained vaccinators and cold chain systems, the tools developed to reach every child with polio vaccines are strengthening routine immunization and helping close critical gaps in coverage. Learn about how polio's legacy is benefiting children across Nigeria. [[More](#)]

DONOR UPDATES

WHO expresses deep appreciation to **Monaco** for extending its decades-long support for polio eradication through 2027–2029, announced at the World Health Assembly.

WHO thanks **Japan** for its contribution of US\$ 120 000 to support global polio eradication efforts.

WHO thanks **Türkiye** for its longstanding support for global polio eradication efforts and for its recent contribution of US\$ 20 000.

UNICEF and WHO thank **Canada** for the final disbursements totaling Can\$ 45 million in support of global polio eradication activities. This contribution forms part of Canada's three-year pledge of Can\$ 151 million to the GPEI, announced in 2024, helping vaccinate upwards of 350 million children annually.

Photo of the Month



Convincing to protect: restoring trust in vaccination in Benin © WHO African Region