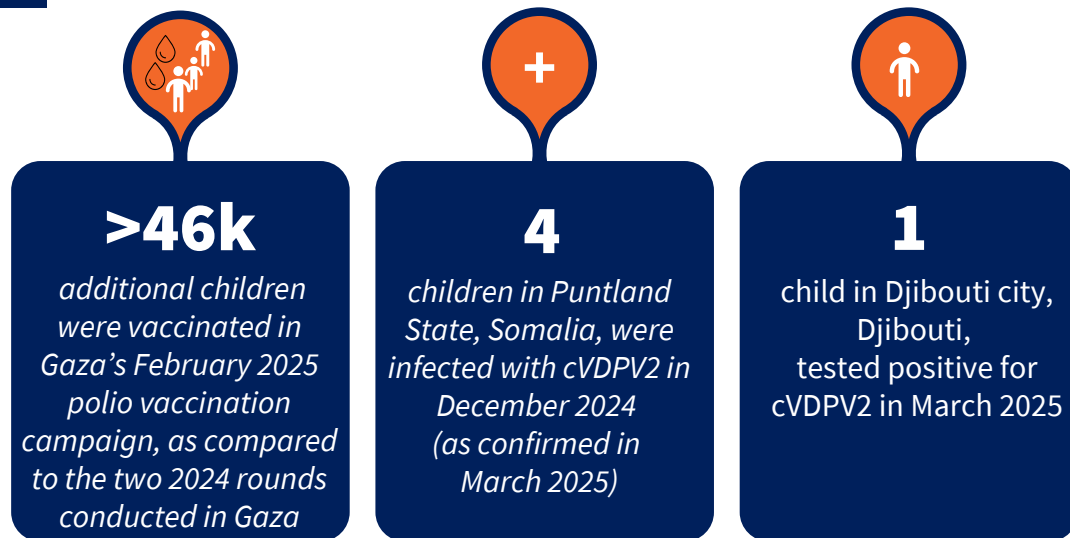


MENA EMR REGIONAL CVDPV OUTBREAKS

Issue #41 | Week 1 (2 January 2025) - Week 15 (ending 10 April 2025)

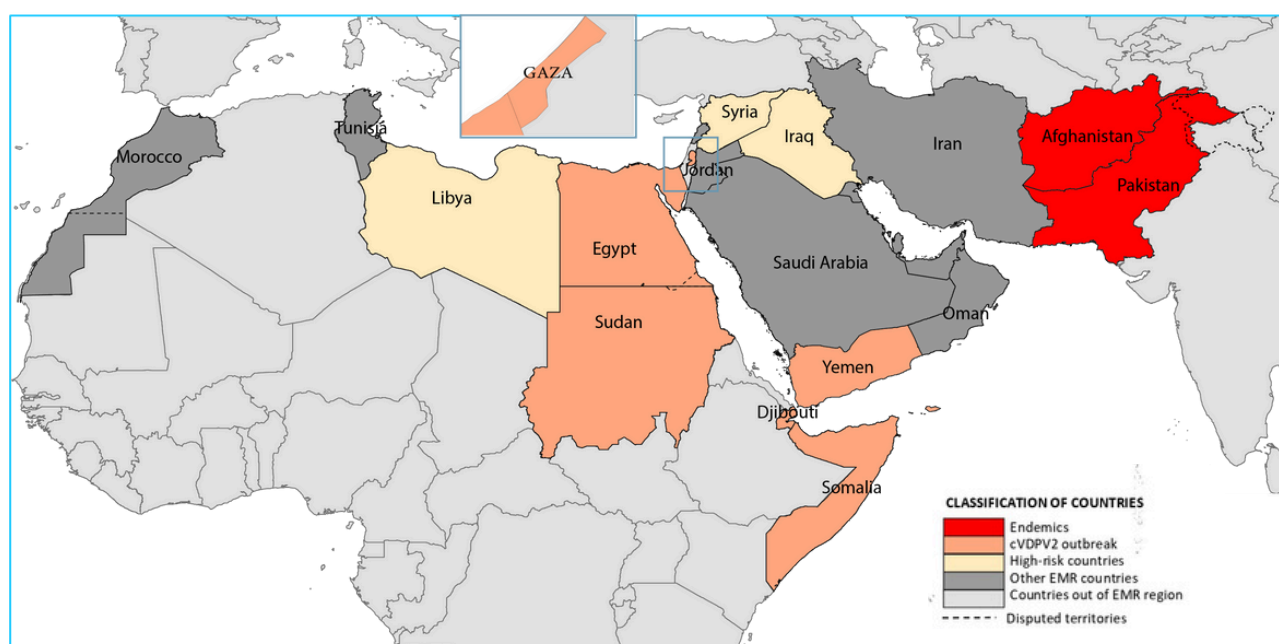
BY THE NUMBERS:



SITUATION UPDATE

- The **occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)** continues to report ongoing poliovirus transmission, with circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) confirmed in samples from environmental surveillance collected in Gaza. As part of continued efforts to stop polio transmission, a third round of polio vaccination that was conducted from 22-26 February 2025 vaccinated 602 795 children under ten years of age. A fourth round of polio vaccination campaign is planned as the situation allows.
- On 12 March 2025, cVDPV2 was confirmed in four children presenting with acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) in **Bossaso, Puntland State, Somalia, all four of whom had onset of paralysis in December 2024**, which brings the total number of cVDPV2 cases reported in 2024 to seven. All four isolates were orphan viruses. Additionally, cVDPV2 was detected in a sewage sample collected on 5 January 2025 from an environmental surveillance site in South Galkayo district, Galmudug State.
- **Access within Sudan's states has significantly improved.** Around 76% of Sudan is now accessible for government functions as of early January 2025, as compared to 59% in 2024. The polio programme is working to resume poliovirus surveillance in newly accessible states, as programmatic access is made available, including to mitigate poliovirus spread from Chad and Ethiopia, both facing cVDPV2 outbreaks. The last isolate related to SUD-RED-1 was detected in January 2024.
- In **Yemen, cVDPV2 was reported in 37 children in 2024.** As of 2025, no cVDPV2 cases have been confirmed among the AFP cases reported to date. So far, stool samples of 899 AFP cases reported from the northern governorate, the epicentre of the outbreak, have not been shipped to the polio laboratory since June 2024. The northern authorities have recently approved the shipping of stool samples from 688 of these AFP cases.

Poliovirus in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2025



Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) isolates related to outbreaks and events

Country	Date of first isolate	Date of last isolate	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		TOTAL	
			cVDPV isolated in children with AFP and environmental surveillance:																			
			AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES	AFP	ES
cVDPV2 outbreaks and events																						
Djibouti	3-Oct-21	12-Jan-25								5		12				9	1	3	1	29		
Egypt	10-Jan-21	1-Aug-24								11		6		11		2			0	30		
oPt (Gaza)	23-Jun-24	5-Mar-25													1	20		7	1	27		
Somalia	22-Oct-17	5-Jan-25		2	6	19	3	5	14	26	1	1	5	6	8	9	7	3	1	44	72	
Sudan	31-Oct-22	24-Jan-24											1	1		5		2		1	8	
Yemen	20-Jun-21	15-Dec-24									65	13	162	26	8	16	37	12			272	67
cVDPV1 outbreak																						
Yemen	18-Sep-19	27-Mar-21					1		31		3									35	0	



SITUATION UPDATE

DJIBOUTI



- On 2 March 2025, cVDPV2 was confirmed in a stool sample collected on 12 January 2025 from a child with AFP in the city of Djibouti. Genetic sequencing showed that the virus is linked to a strain previously detected in the environment in Djibouti in 2024, originating from the ETH-TIG-1 emergence from Ethiopia. This isolation confirms a cVDPV2 outbreak in Djibouti.
- cVDPV2 was also detected in 10 samples of sewage water in Djibouti. These samples were collected between 8 September 2024 and 19 January 2025. Most of these samples are genetically linked to poliovirus circulating in Ethiopia (ETH-TIG-1), while a few are genetically linked to virus circulating in Somalia (SOM-BAN-1) and Yemen (YEM-TAI-1).

Outbreak response:

- Following a risk assessment conducted in February 2025, the Ministry of Health in Djibouti and partners are conducting nationwide nOPV2 campaigns from 12-16 April and May 2025, in response to the cVDPV2 outbreak and to prevent any further importations of poliovirus.

EGYPT



- Poliovirus related to novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2)—cVDPV2n— from the emergence from North Sinai - EGY-NOR-1 - was last detected around 15 months ago, on 30 December 2023.

Outbreak response:

- In view of no detections of the poliovirus in North Sinai since December 2023, Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population has requested the World Health Organization (WHO) to coordinate with partners and conduct an Outbreak Response Assessment (OBRA) to determine the status of the polio outbreak identified in the area in August 2023. The OBRA is scheduled for April 2025.

OPT (GAZA)



- Gaza continues to report ongoing poliovirus transmission, with cVDPV2 confirmed in samples from environmental surveillance collected on 5 March 2025 in Gaza. The detection of cVDPV2 in Gaza City indicates that poliovirus had spread with population movement between Northern and Southern Gaza following the ceasefire that remained in place between 19 January and 18 March 2025. As of Epi Week 15 of 2025, cVDPV2 had been detected in seven sewage samples from Gaza. In 2024, Gaza had confirmed cVDPV2 in one child and 20 sewage samples.

Outbreak response:

- In response to the continued detection of cVDPV2 in 2025, a third round of polio vaccination was conducted from 22-26 February 2025. The campaign vaccinated 602 795 children under 10 years of age with novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), reaching over 46 000 additional children as compared to the previous two rounds conducted in 2024, largely due to improved access to children during the ceasefire.
- The February campaign benefited from strategic operational adjustments, including an increase in mobile teams deployed; transit teams positioned at key checkpoints to reach families on the move; and targeted social mobilization efforts in Northern Gaza governorate, where the programme had limited access during the last round of 2024.



SITUATION UPDATE

OPT (GAZA) CONTD.

- To stop transmission of poliovirus in Gaza and prevent its spread to other locations, there is a need to conduct additional high-quality polio campaigns so that all targeted children are vaccinated, and once the transmission is stopped, a robust routine immunization delivery system is in place to sustain the gains. This requires a ceasefire so that the vaccination teams can visit the families where they reside and allow mothers and fathers to bring their children to vaccination centres. Considering the volatile situation on the ground, such a campaign is not possible to implement now. However, a fourth round of polio vaccination campaign is planned as the situation allows.
- Concurrently, efforts are being made to strengthen routine immunization in Gaza by increasing the number of facilities providing vaccination services and expanding their reach.

SOMALIA



- In 2024, cVDPV2 was detected in a total of seven children and three sewage water samples. Of these, four children infected in December were from Bossaso, Puntland State, Somalia. The date of onset of paralysis in the most recently reported case of cVDPV2 is 31 December 2024.
- cVDPV2 was detected in one sewage sample collected on 5 January 2025 from a site in South Galkayo district of the Galmudug State. The recently detected cVDPV2 in Somalia is genetically linked to ongoing circulation in Ethiopia.

Outbreak response:

- In 2025, two national immunization days (NIDs) and three subnational immunization days (SNIDs) are planned for central and south Somalia, using nOPV2. The first round of SNIDs was conducted from 16-20 February 2025, in 76 of the 81 districts in central and south Somalia, reaching approximately 2.4 million out of a targeted 2.5 million children aged under five years of age (96% of the target, according to administrative coverage). The remaining districts were inaccessible due to insecurity. Plans are ongoing to negotiate access in these geographies to implement targeted short-interval additional dose (SIAD) immunization activities as and when access becomes possible.
- Following the recent confirmation of cVDPV2 in Puntland, the Federal Government of Somalia is planning to integrate nOPV2 with the measles and pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) campaign scheduled for April 2025. The WHO Director-General has approved 2.14 million doses for this campaign.
- Transit Polio Vaccinators (TPVs), deployed at strategic locations across Somalia's border, are supporting the vaccination of children under ten years of age with nOPV2, to mitigate the risk of cross-border poliovirus transmission. The GPEI team in Somalia is working closely with counterparts from Ethiopia and Kenya to further strengthen cross-border coordination for polio surveillance and campaign synchronization.
- In Somalia, from Week 1-15 of 2025, house-to-house activities, including social mobilization, community meetings, and sensitization in high-risk priority groups, reached more than 1.1 million households. The National Islamic Advisory Group (NIAG) engaged communities through more than 700 religious institutions, and nomadic elders reached around 1800 nomadic areas, with around 20 000 people of nomadic background. Additionally, gatekeepers of internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps reached more than 20 000 IDPs; sound truck announcements reached more than 1700 villages; and media activities, including via the radio and SMS broadcasts, reached 5.2 million caregivers.



SITUATION UPDATE

SUDAN



- Between 18 September 2023 and 11 January 2025, five environmental samples tested positive for cVDPV2 in Sudan. All isolates were from the SUD-RED-1 emergence, with circulation limited to Red Sea State and no virus detected in children.
- The fifteenth batch of shipment of AFP and ES samples was transported across Sudan and delivered to the VACSERA Regional Lab in Egypt on 24 February 2025 for testing. One of these samples tested positive for ambiguous vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (aVDPV2) in a 30-month-old child, from White Nile State, who developed paralysis in November 2024. Field investigation did not show any evidence of local circulation.

Outbreak response:

- From 23-25 August 2024, Sudan implemented the second round of SIAs in response to the SUD-RED-1 outbreak. Due to access constraints, the campaign was initially implemented in only five out of eight targeted states. The second round for White Nile and Blue Nile States was conducted subsequently from 11-14 November and 17-20 December 2024 respectively.
- Despite the ongoing conflict, health workers successfully vaccinated more than 3 million children with nOPV2 across seven states, as part of the staggered second round response.

YEMEN



- Since the start of the outbreak in 2021, a total of 275 vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (VDPV2) cases, 272 of which are cVDPV2. Of these, 37 were confirmed in 2024. The most recent case had onset of paralysis on 16 September 2024. Molecular analysis shows that most cases have genetic links to YEM-TAI-1 which first emerged in Taiz governorate of Yemen, while six isolates were genetically linked to SUD-RED-1, a strain that first emerged in the Red Sea State of Sudan. So far, stool samples of 899 AFP cases reported from the northern governorate, the epicentre of the outbreak, have not been shipped to the polio laboratory since June 2024. However, recently, the authorities in the northern governorates have approved the shipping of samples from 688 AFP cases to the polio laboratory.
- From Week 1 to Week 14 2025, Yemen reported 266 AFP cases.

Outbreak response:

- The health authorities in Sana'a are working with partners to respond to the ongoing cVDPV2 outbreak, which started in 2021. The authorities in northern governorates of Yemen will begin multi-antigen activities in phases due to security challenges, from May 2025 onwards.
- In the southern governorates of Yemen, preparations are underway for a polio vaccination campaign in May 2025 to administer nOPV2 to children, aiming to protect against potential spillover from northern governorates. The scope of the campaign will be determined following the results of a risk assessment in the southern governorates of Yemen.



REGIONAL COORDINATION

UNICEF retreat to strengthen polio outbreak response

In January 2025, UNICEF convened a retreat (hybrid, with in-person participation in Kenya) with representatives from UNICEF Headquarters, regional and country offices to strengthen polio outbreak response. At a special session, other GPEI partners joined to participate. The meeting provided a platform for participants to discuss opportunities and challenges in outbreak response, including in key strategic areas such as programme efficiency and quality, resource mobilization, vaccine supply, human resource capacity, and advocacy.

Participants focused on developing roadmaps, action plans, and recommendations to strengthen the polio outbreak response, particularly in consequential geographies, including Yemen, and fragile and high-risk countries.

The Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum

During the fourth Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum, convened in February 2025, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed agreements with the GPEI, to reaffirm its US\$ 500 million pledge made in 2024. This funding will support the vaccination of 370 million children annually. Delegates from the GPEI partnership joined H.E. Dr Abdullah al Rabeeah, Supervisor General of King Salman Relief and Humanitarian Centre, who hosted the forum.

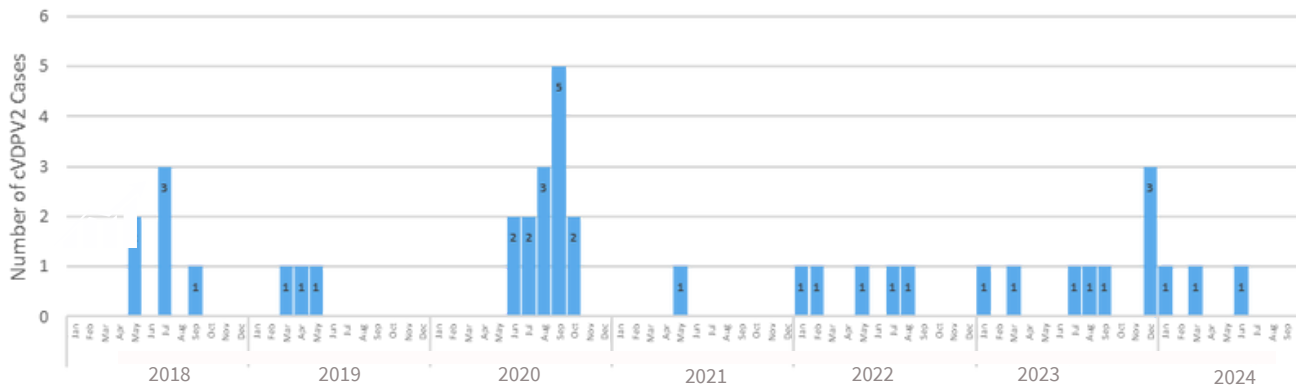
International Women's Day

On International Women's Day this year, commemorated on 8 March 2025, Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, took on a new role -the polio programme's newest gender champion. Dr Balkhy affirmed her commitment to stand with and support the Region's female health workers. Through an op-ed, she urged governments, donors and partners to empower women at all levels and invest in and advance gender equity for a healthier future for all.

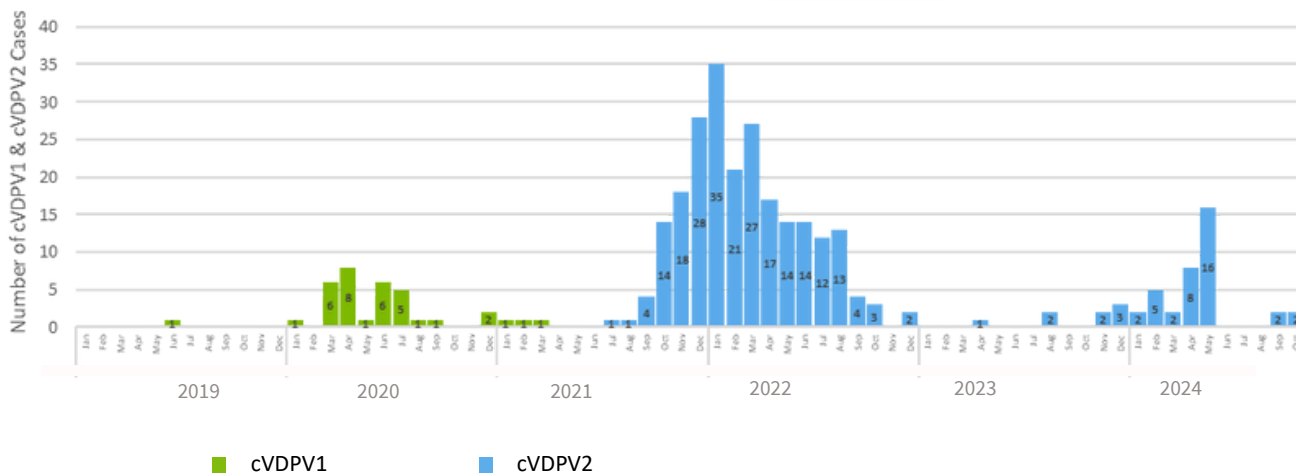
GPEI partners shone the spotlight on women who are serving the polio programme in different capacities, including some serving in Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, to acknowledge their contributions to polio eradication efforts.

OUTBREAK EPI CURVES

cVDPV2-Somalia (2018-2024)



cVDPV1 & cVDPV2-Yemen (2019-2024)



■ cVDPV1

■ cVDPV2

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Relevant links:

- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative \(GPEI\) website](#)
- [Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026](#)
- [Regional Subcommittee on Polio Eradication](#)
- [GPEI factsheet—VDPV](#)
- [Vaccine-derived polioviruses animation](#)