

Highlights



124,000

children under age five received polio vaccine during the integrated outreach activities completed on 5 July in Sa'adah, Yemen.



46

environmental surveillance (ES) sites are operating in 27 provinces in Egypt.



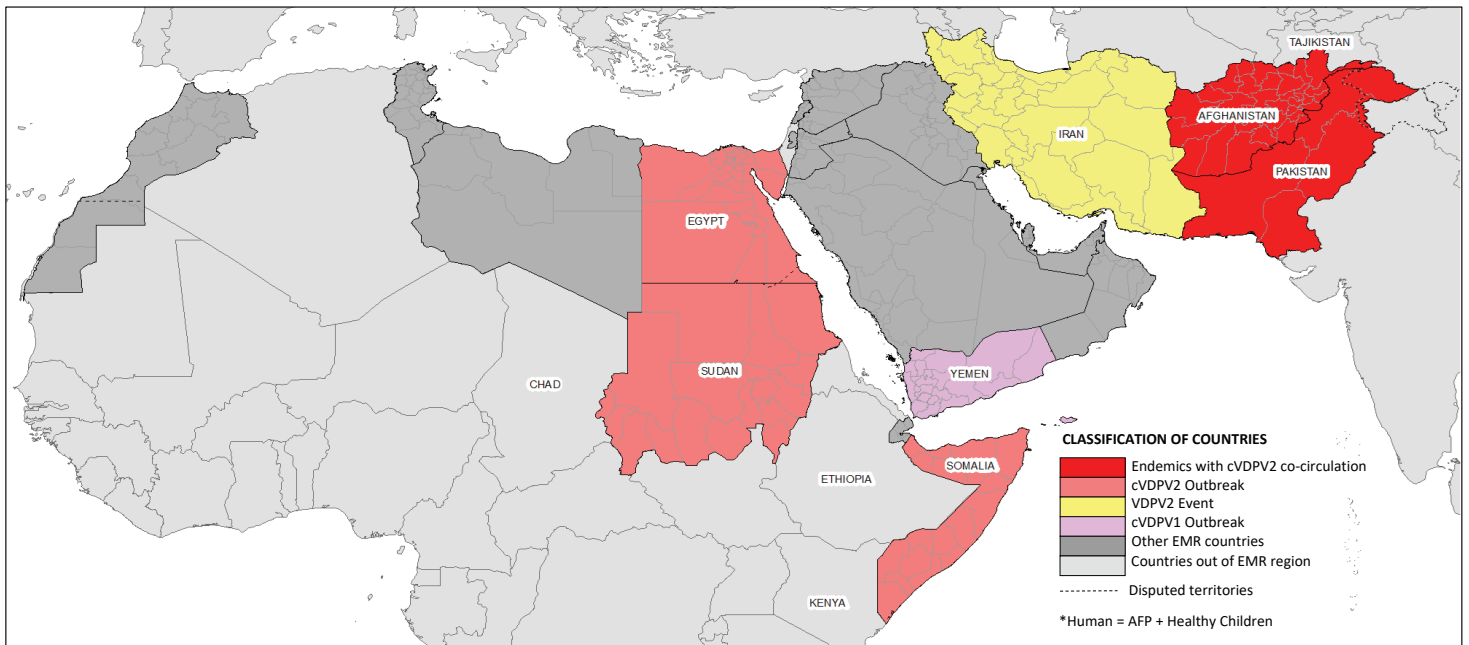
Seven

countries in the EMR-MENA regions are actively involved in nOPV2 preparations: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan.

Situation Update

- Countries within the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa and WHO Eastern Mediterranean regions continue to respond to the detection of circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (cVDPVs) through the Regional Incident Management Support Team (IMST). The IMST comprises relevant expertise from both UN agencies.
- The GPEI is working with countries to prepare for the regional first use of novel Oral Polio Vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), expected in 2021. To date, about 73% of all nOPV2 readiness requirements have been submitted by the countries.
- No cVDPV2 positive environmental samples have been detected in **Egypt** since the most recent detection on 8 June 2021. To date, 10 cVDPV2 samples have been isolated across six governorates. However, 43 environmental samples collected from 22 governorates between 28 April and 25 July 2021 have confirmed separate emergences of VDPV2.
- No cVDPV2 positive environmental samples have been reported in **Iran** since the most recent detection on 20 February 2021. To date, four cVDPV2 samples have been isolated, all from Sistan and Balochistan (S&B) province.
- In **Sudan**, no new cases of cVDPV2 have been detected to date. A total of 58 cases were reported in 2020, with the most recent case having onset of paralysis on 18 December 2020.
- No new cases of cVDPV1 have been detected in **Yemen** since the most recent detection on 25 March 2021. In 2021, Yemen reported three cVDPV1 cases, all from Sa'adah governorate.

Countries in WHO's EM Region with WPV, cVDPV1 and cVDPV2 circulation 2021



Egypt:

- In addition to the detection of cVDPV2, a total of 43 environmental samples collected from 22 governorates between 28 April and 25 July 2021 have confirmed separate emergences of VDPV2. Unlike cVDPV2, these new isolates are not genetically related to each other or to any other VDPV2s reported from Egypt or elsewhere.
- A total of 709 AFP cases were reported up to week 31. The non-polio acute flaccid paralysis (NPAFP) rate is three, while the stool adequacy rate is 89.1%. This reflects a well-functioning AFP surveillance system, which is supplemented by an extensive ES network (46 sites in 27 provinces; at least one in each province).

Iran:

- A new VDPV2 environmental sample collected from the Zahidan District site on 10 July 2021 has confirmed the isolation of VDPV2. Sequencing indicates that this is a separate emergence to the previously reported cVDPV2 isolates and that it is not related to any other VDPV2s reported from Iran or elsewhere.
- A total of 398 AFP cases were reported up to week 31. The NPAFP rate is 3.3, while the stool adequacy rate is 96%, reflecting a well-functioning AFP surveillance system. ES is conducted at five sites in S&B province, which has extensive population movement to and from Pakistan and Afghanistan, where there is dual infection of wild poliovirus (WPV) and cVDPV2.

Sudan:

- A total of 332 AFP cases were reported up to week 31. The NPAFP rate is 2.8 and stool adequacy rate is 94.3%, reflecting a well-functioning AFP surveillance system.
- During July, additional ES sites in North Darfur, West Darfur and Red Sea states were activated for monthly collection. A total of 10 samples were collected from newly expanded sites and are currently being tested at the National Polio Laboratory (NPL) in Khartoum.
- In Khartoum, technical officers from the National Polio Laboratory were trained on new testing kits as part of the country's preparation for the introduction of nOPV2.
- A Sabin-like type 2 (SL2) isolate was identified at the new ES site in Port Sudan, Red Sea state, on 2 August 2021. The isolation shows the new site is functioning, but also raises questions: SL2 is typically isolated in the weeks after a campaign, not more than four months after last use of mOPV2. An investigation including assessment of available mOPV2 stocks is ongoing.

Yemen:

- A total of 437 AFP cases were reported up to week 31. The NPAFP rate is 4.7 and stool adequacy rate is 91.5%, reflecting a well-functioning AFP surveillance system.
- In July 2021, 75 samples were sent to the Regional Reference Laboratory (RRL) in Muscat and 132 samples to Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) lab. All of these were specimens from AFP cases with date of onset of paralysis from April-July 2021.
- ES activities have started, with pilot specimens collected in July 2021 from Sana'a. ES training for the southern governorates is planned for August 2021.



Surveillance officers participate in training as part of environmental surveillance expansion activities in Sudan. Photo: WHO/Sudan



Outbreak response update

Egypt:

- Teams in Egypt are focused on response activities that support two strategic priorities – the completion of preparations for nOPV2 use and the implementation of preparatory activities for high quality SIAs. The latter is to be validated independently against agreed criteria.
- With support from UNICEF and WHO, the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) is urgently working towards readiness to introduce nOPV2 as the preferred vaccine to respond to the current epidemiological situation.
- MoHP and WHO conducted two joint missions to Luxor and Qena governorates to review Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and surveillance procedures and identify gaps in registration, procedures to track EPI defaulters and incomplete records. Mission members developed a plan of action to track all EPI defaulters and complete all vaccination records within one month.
- The Outbreak Preparedness and Response Task Team (OPRTT) approved the July-December surge budget for Egypt, which includes required activities for outbreak response and nOPV2 introduction.

Iran:

- Responding to the evolving security situation in Afghanistan, which has triggered population movement to Iran, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education is searching for AFP cases and providing vaccination services for children in government-established refugee camps.
- WHO has allocated funds to speed up the process of nOPV2 readiness, which was delayed due to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases.

Sudan:

- Sudan is progressing nOPV2 readiness requirements through detailed interactions with the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), which continues to provide the necessary documents as per nOPV2 preparedness guidelines.
- Planning is underway for the outbreak response assessment, which will be conducted with FMOH from 20 to 24 September 2021, to provide guidance for further outbreak activities and pave the way for the final assessment for closure of the outbreak.
- A training of trainers (TOT) workshop on interpersonal communication was organized for EPI managers and health promotion directors.

Yemen:

- In Sa'adah governorate, the second phase of integrated outreach activities, aimed to reach 200,000 children under age five with polio vaccine and other primary health care services, was completed on 5 July 2021. Coverage shows that 60% of targeted children were vaccinated against polio and 51% against measles.
- The Third-Party Monitoring (TPM) report for the second round of outbreak response in 14 northern governorates was released and shows that 97% of children under age five screened by monitors were vaccinated.



Vaccine logistics

- The FMOH in **Sudan** is recalling all vials of remaining stocks of mOPV2 to the national level for proper storage and disposal as per guidelines.
- With support from GAVI, **Sudan** has introduced the second dose of IPV into the national immunization schedule.
- In **Yemen**, vaccine and non-vaccine supplies for OPV and measles have been secured for both integrated outreach rounds in Sa'adah governorate and for supplementary immunization activities (SIAs).



Regional coordination

- A three-level OPRTT meeting was convened on 8 July 2021 to discuss the budget and plan upcoming outbreak response activities for **Yemen**. OPRTT approved implementing three rounds of polio and measles SIAs in Sa'adah governorate between August and December 2021.



Health and humanitarian situation

- To date, more than 13 million COVID-19 cases and 240,000 deaths have been reported from 22 countries across WHO's EMR since the first registered case on 29 January 2020. The Delta variant continues to cause concern due to its transmissibility. It is now a dominant variant in several countries, especially in Iraq, Iran, Libya and Tunisia.
- Iran's total COVID-19 cases exceeded four million in early August, with an unprecedented 24-hour increase of over 39,000 new cases on 4 August 2021. This dramatic increase is compounded by an influx of population fleeing insecurity in Afghanistan.
- The security situation continues to deteriorate in Afghanistan. Violence has escalated since May when international forces began their withdrawal. More than 329,000 Afghans are currently displaced (per OCHA) and civilian casualties in the first half of 2021 have reached record levels (per UNAMA). In Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, GPEI partners and stakeholders have been supporting the development of risk assessments and contingency plans, which consider the impact of displaced populations and support enhanced surveillance and opportunistic vaccination.
- Amidst political stalemate and armed conflict in Marib and Al-Jawf governorates, Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg was named the new UN envoy to Yemen to push for a political solution to end the protracted war.



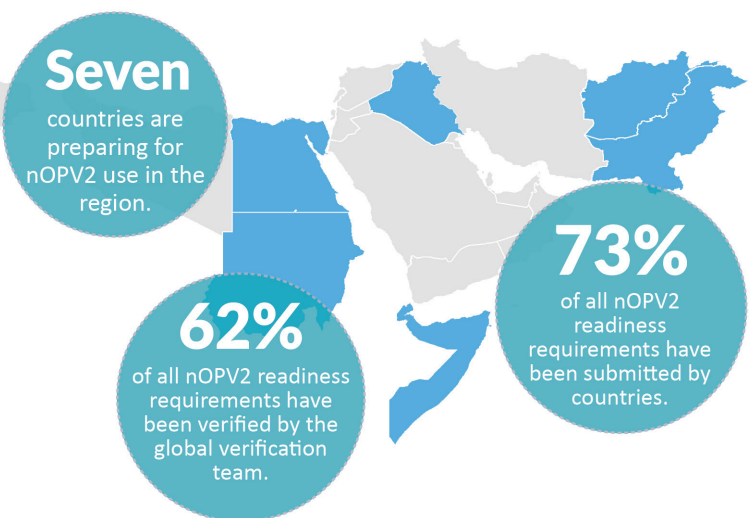
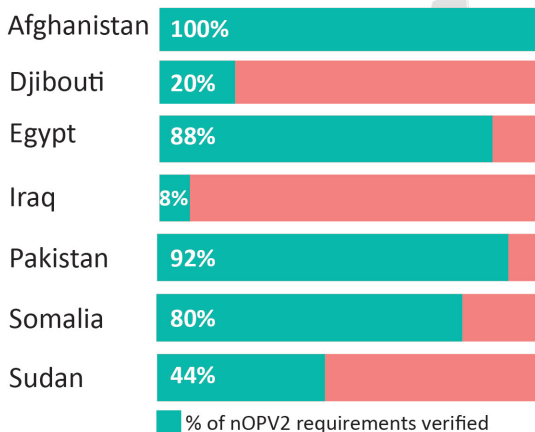
Global developments

- The Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026: Delivering on a Promise – Stakeholder Consultation Report was published on 14 July 2021, providing an outline of the consultation process, a summary of feedback received and responses from the authors on key points raised and questions asked.

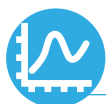
nOPV2 progress update - up to week 31, 2021

The polio partnership is working with countries to prepare for the regional first use of nOPV2, expected in 2021.

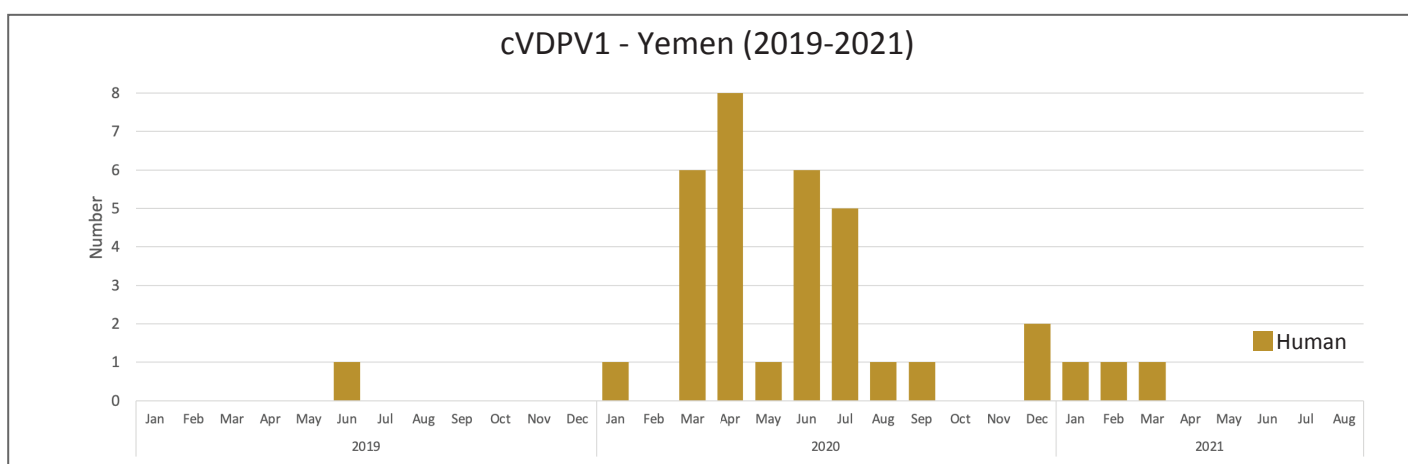
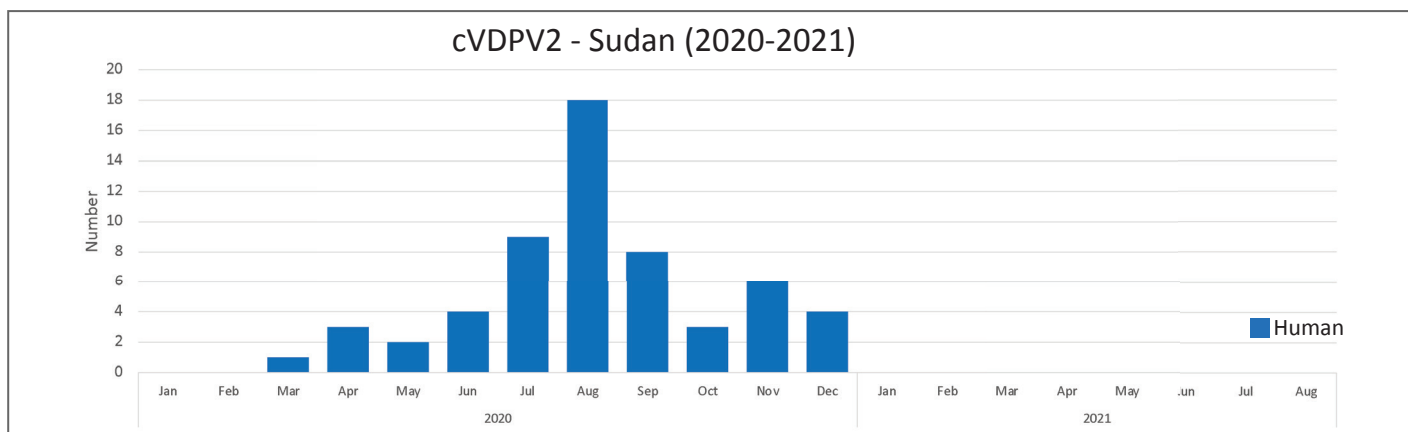
Update on country-level progress



The Regional nOPV2 Dashboard, a tool to monitor countries' progress towards nOPV2 readiness, is live.



Outbreak EPI curves



Other cVDPV2 Outbreaks in the EMR

2020

Regional cVDPV2 outbreaks				Environmental surveillance			
	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Somalia		Afghanistan	Pakistan	Somalia
	305	135	14		174	135	26
Most recent onset of paralysis	30 December 2020	24 December 2020	25 October 2020	Most recent collection	27 December 2020	28 December 2020	24 October 2020

2021

Regional cVDPV2 outbreaks			Environmental surveillance		
	Afghanistan	Pakistan		Afghanistan	Pakistan
	43	8		40	32
Most recent onset of paralysis	9 July 2021	23 April 2021	Most recent collection	9 July 2021	18 May 2021

Send questions to:

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Relevant links:

- Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) website
- Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026
- IMST outbreak dashboard
- Regional Subcommittee on Polio Eradication
- GPEI factsheet—VDPV
- Vaccine-derived polioviruses animation