

Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

## Syrian Arab Republic

### Situation Report No. 12

#### *Highlights*

- Since last sitrep two more polio cases are declared as confirm 1 case from Hasakeh and One case of Deir-ez-Zor.
- Total 25 confirmed polio cases till to date for the year 2013.
- The distribution of the polio cases for the year 2013 is as 18 cases from Deir-ez-Zor Governorate, 2 from Hasakeh, 3 from Aleppo and 2 from Idleb Governorate.
  - One more compatible case from Deir-z- Zour Government, Total # of compatible cases for 2013 is 11. Deir-ez-Zor 7, Aleppo 3, Hasakeh 1.
- 03 more AFP cases line listed for the year 2013 raising the no of AFP cases to 165.
- 09 more AFP cases reported since last sitrep for 2014. Total # of reported AFP cases for 2014 are 24
- Two surveillance workshops organized for 6 Governorates by WHO/MoH at Damascus from 10-11<sup>th</sup> and 12-13<sup>th</sup> February 2014.
- Two workshops for 14 governorates organized at Damascus by WHO/MoH to review February Polio campaign and discuss Planning for March NIDS 2014 on dated 16-17 and 19-20 February 2014.

Prior to the current outbreak, Syria's last confirmed polio case (due to an imported wild poliovirus) was in 1999. Syria remained polio free till October 2013 when wild poliovirus was confirmed in Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo, following importation of wild poliovirus closely related to strains currently circulating in Pakistan. So far, the total numbers of confirmed polio cases are 25 for the year 2013. Before the current crisis, the immunization programme in Syria was one of the best programmes in the Region. The coverage rate of the OPV 3rd dose was above 90% until the year 2010 and then declined sharply to 68% in 2012 due to the crisis. The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in collaboration with W.H.O and UNICEF has taken the re-emerging polio cases in Syria seriously and has developed a rapid and effective response plan.

This report summarizes the situation as of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014.

#### **Epidemiological situation:**

18 confirmed polio cases from Deir ez-Zour Governorate, 03 polio cases from Aleppo Governorate, 02 confirmed case from Al. Hasakeh Governorate and 2 confirmed polio cases from Idleb Governorate.

Most of the cases are below 3 years of age and the male children are more than female children.

Table below shows the comparison of the polio cases and non-polio AFP cases by age group year 2013.

Age group in months	Polio cases		Non-polio AFP cases	
	No.	%	No.	%
<12	8	32%	19	13.6%
12-23	11	44%	24	17%
24-35	3	12	12	8.6%
36-47	1	4%	23	16.4%
48-59	2	8%	3	2.1%
60+	0	0%	59	42.3%
Total	25	100%	140	100%

The comparison of immunity profile (diagram 1 & 2) of the polio cases and non-polio AFP cases shows the clear effect of low OPV doses.

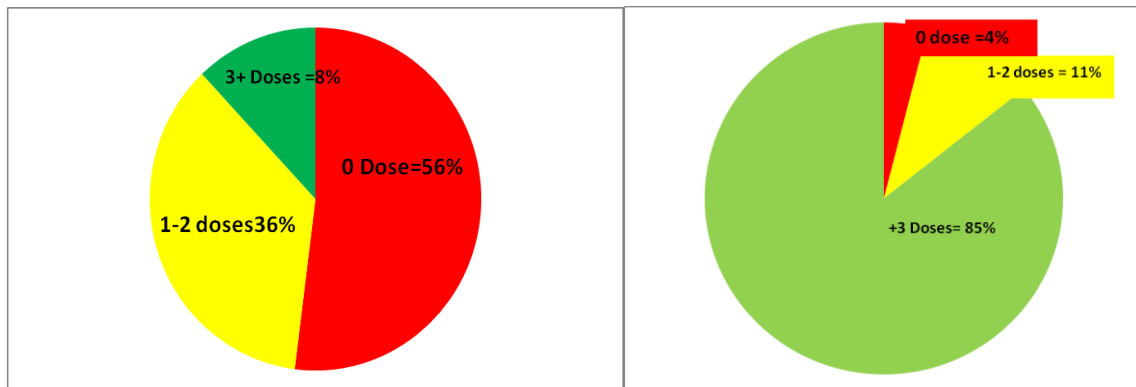
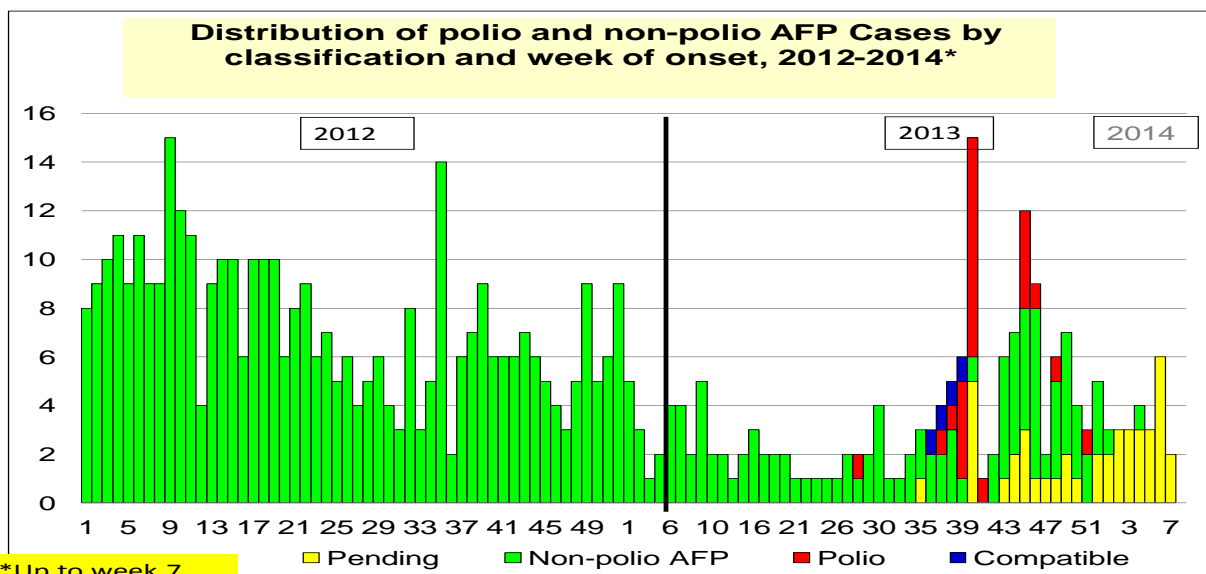
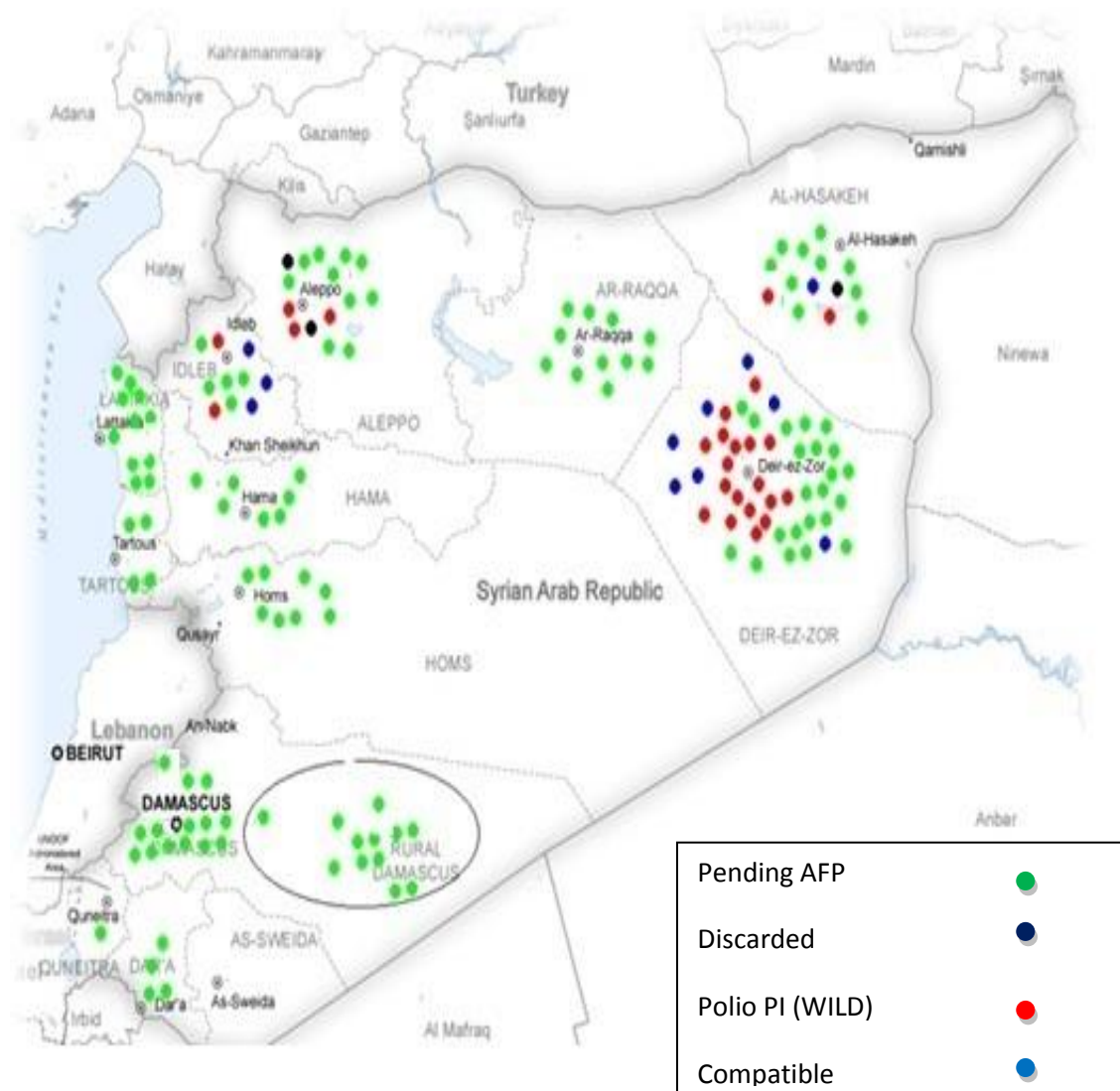


Diagram # 3.



Map 1.

25 Polio cases occurred in 4 Governorates. The spot map below shows the distribution of AFP cases by classification.



**Map2.** The map below indicates the distribution of AFP cases by classification in year 2014

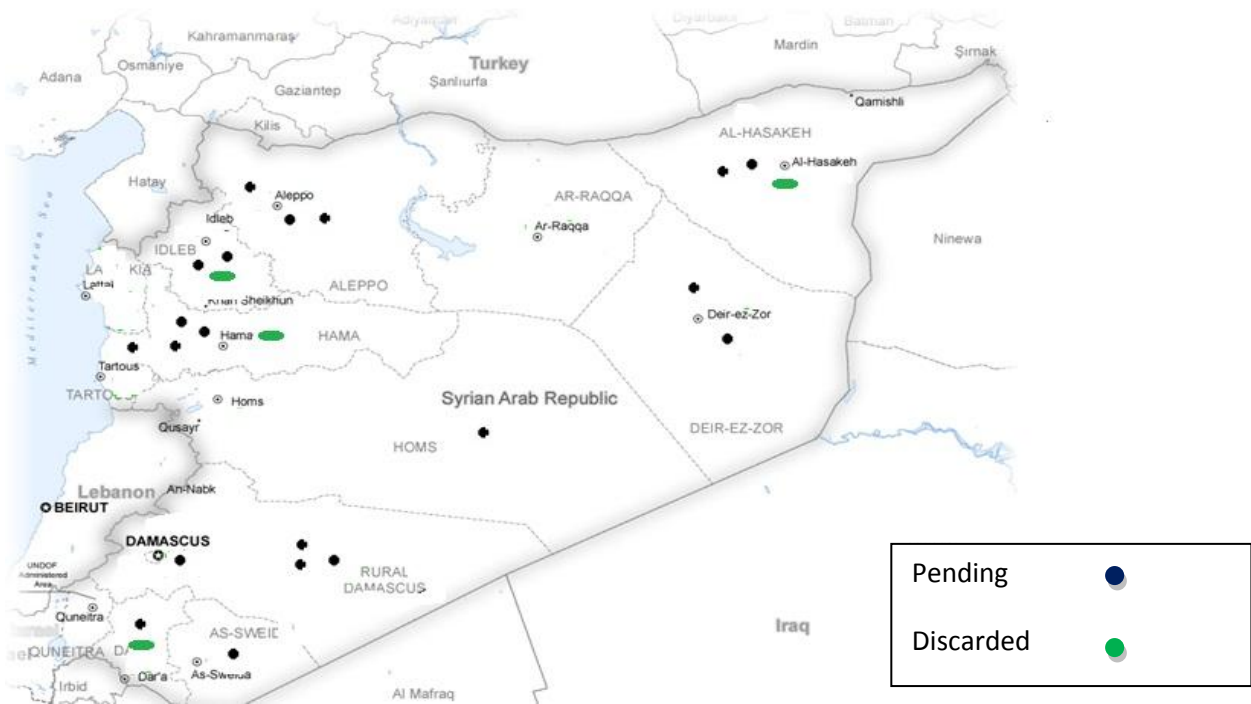
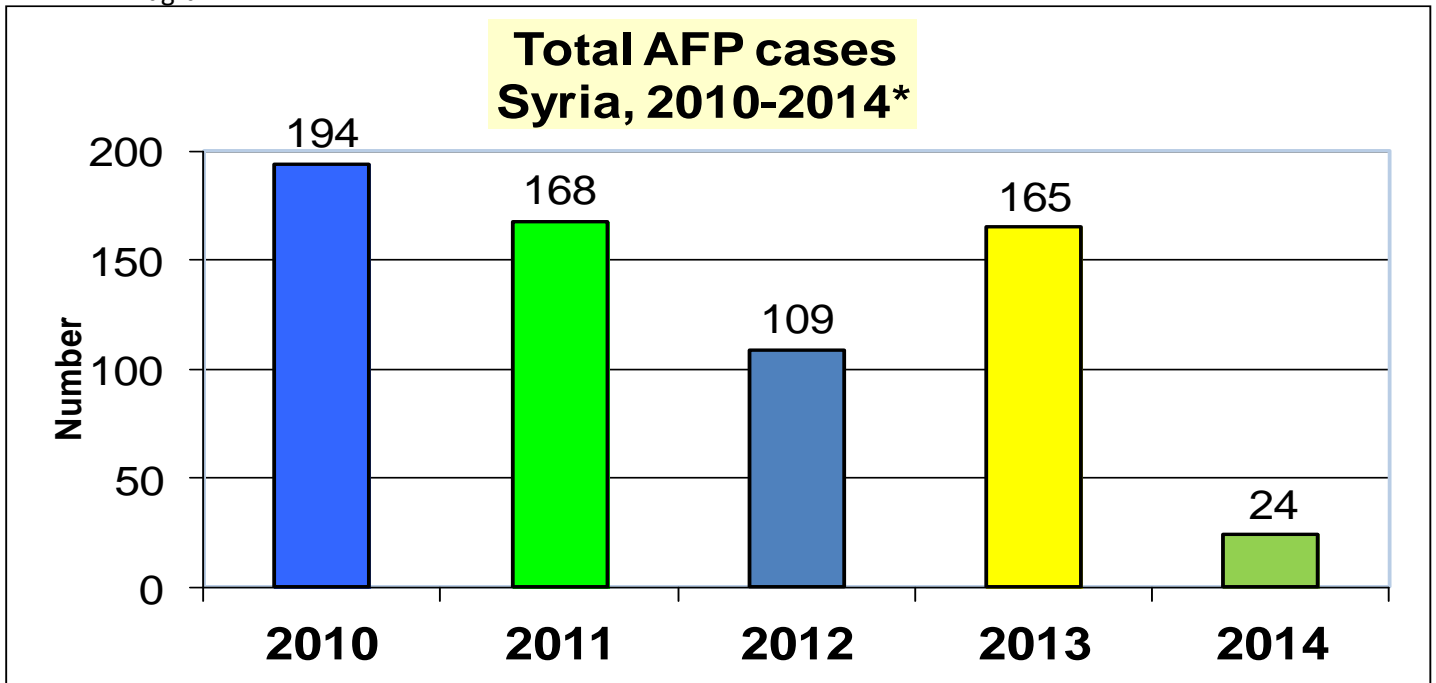


Diagram 4.



**Actions taken so far:**

As a response to the initial detection of cases due to wild poliovirus in Deir ez-Zor province and the confirmation of the outbreak on 17 October 2013, the programme undertook the following steps:

- The information was immediately disseminated to the MOH officials, EPI staff and partners. An urgent meeting was conducted by the EPI Unit with the support of the Director PHC to discuss the situation and identify the immediate activities to be done in response to this outbreak.
- Coordination with national and international partners has been undertaken in order to prepare a consolidated response plan.
- Partners especially WHO and UNICEF were requested to mobilize additional resources to meet the response plan.
- Advocacy activities: MOH issued a statement for the media representatives of the NGOs, explaining the current situation of polio outbreak in Syria.
- A meeting with national partners from other governmental sectors was convened in Damascus on 19/11/2013. The purpose of the meeting was to mobilize all other sectors to support the polio eradication activities in order to curb the outbreak very fast.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013, HE the Minister of Health convened a press conference in the presence of WR and UNICEF communication officer. HE announced officially the confirmation of the last 4 polio cases. HE also announced that Syria will conduct 6 NIDs round in addition to the last month round.
- UNICEF provided 25 cold rooms with generators, 200 cold box, 50,000 safety box, 500 Vaccine carriers, and 2,000 thermometer and freeze tags to strengthen cold chain system.
- Two senior officers from the Global WHO Polio Eradication Initiative (Chris Maher and Rudi Tangerman) visited Syria during the period 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> January 2014. This visit came as a response to an invitation from Syrian MOH. The main purpose of the visit was to lead a seminar on polio outbreak response in Syria. The target audiences were the Syrian pediatricians. The seminar was convened on 5/1/2014. Additional advocacy visits and interviews with the local media were also undertaken by the both officers.

**Immunization response:**

- An already planned national immunization campaign using trivalent OPV (tOPV) and measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) was carried out from 24 October to 21 November.
- The total number of the vaccinated children in this first immunization campaign using tOPV was 2.3 million children.
- The second national round using bivalent OPV (bOPV and tOPV) started on 8 December 2013. The plan was to finish on 12 December, but due to heavy snow in several governorates the campaign has been prolonged for additional 3 days.

- On December, 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013, the Minister of Health has convened a Press Conference in which he announced the final NIDs result. HE the Minister announced that 2.177 million children under 5 years of age have been vaccinated in the 14 governorates.
- The third national round implemented in all the governorates during the period 5-9 January 2014. The supervisors observed the improvement of the campaign quality in comparison to the December round. So far, the total number of vaccinated children is 2.53 million children as per the available reports of the campaign.
- 4<sup>th</sup> National Immunization Campaign using the bOPV implemented in all governorates from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014. As Result shared by MoH 2,706,413 children < 5years of age have been vaccinated in all (14) Governorates.
- The Polio Control Room has been established at MoH and was functional during the campaign days.
- No major problem reported to control room

### **Communication response:**

A communication plan was developed in consultation with MoH, UNICEF and WHO. The key strategies included:

- Advocacy
- Mass communication (mass media and social media)
- Community mobilization
- IEC
- Capacity building
- Monitoring, research and documentation

### **Surveillance response:**

- Active surveillance has been strengthened in all governorates by MOH surveillance officers with the support of the WHO focal points. Daily zero reporting is re-activated in Deir ez-Zor.
- Sensitization of the public and private clinicians was done to ensure the immediate reporting of any additional AFP cases to the EPI team in their area.
- Coordination with different parties has been initiated to facilitated the collection and shipment of the stool samples to the reference lab in Damascus
- Standard National AFP investigation forms have been sent to hard to reach areas through the partners who have access to those areas.
- The AFP surveillance indicators during this week remained at the same level as for the previous week.
- A 2<sup>nd</sup> coordination meeting was held on 29/01/2014 for two days in Beirut. MOH, UNICEF, WHO, SARC and concerned staff met and discussed the polio outbreak response progress. The group agreed on several action points to improve the response. These include the enhancement of the upcoming NIDs quality and also AFP

surveillance. To take efforts to reach the inaccessible areas to vaccinate the children < 5yrs of age. The EPI is advised to collect samples from contacts to all AFP cases regardless the adequacy of the samples.

- A weekly AFP surveillance update is produced separately from this report. The below table shows the main AFP surveillance indicators by governorate for 2013. The AFP rate reached more than 2 in 6 governorates, 1-1.9 in 5 governorates and 2 governorates are still below 1 per 100,000 children below 15 years of age. The national AFP rate is 1.6 per 100,000 children below 15 years of age. The adequacy rate hit the target (80%+) in 4 governorates while 10 governorates failed to reach 80%. EV isolation rate is less 8%.

**Below table indicates the status of surveillance performance indicators for the year 2013.**

PROVINCE	POP 2013	Total AFP Cases	Polio	Pending	Compatible cases	Non-polio AFP cases	Annualized AFP rate	% Adequacy	% of NPEV
ALEPPO	1900576	15	3	2	3	7	0.4	33%	20%
DAMASCUS	541662	14				14	2.6	71%	0%
DARA	477277	4				4	0.8	75%	0%
DEIR_AL_ZOUR	624822	49	18		7	24	3.8	65%	12%
EDLEB	654621	10	2			8	1.2	90%	10%
HAMA	615257	7				7	1.1	100%	0%
HASAKEH	591022	14	2	1	1	10	1.7	71%	7%
HOMS	627555	8				8	1.3	50%	0%
LATTAKIA	285110	15				15	5.3	100%	7%
QUNEITERA	38751	1				1	2.6	100%	0%
RAQUA	449073	11				11	2.4	73%	9%
RURAL_DAMASCUS	1061892	12				12	1.1	75%	0%
TARTOUS	218871	5				5	2.3	60%	20%
Grand Total	<b>8,086,489</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>8%</b>

**Table3.**

**Indicates the Governorate wise comparison of vaccinated children < 5years of age in NIDs January 5-9 & February 2-6 2014**

Governorate	Target	# of < 5yrs children Vaccinated in NIDs January 5-9,2014	Coverage %	# of < 5yrs children Vaccinated in NIDs February 2-6,2014	Coverage %
Aleppo	135318	174,249	129%	234,542	173
Al-Hassakeh	247797	259,333	105%	250,485	101
Ar-Raqqa	239100	188,010	79%	247,404	103
As-Sweida	47464	50,648	107%	53,381	112
Damascus	192157	194,744	101%	245,977	128
Dara	93000	98,182	106%	79,460	85
Deir-ez-Zor	294360	263,508	90%	223,833	76
Hama	307946	306,424	100%	295,926	96
Homs	155487	162,463	104%	167,447	108
Idleb	201000	209,707	104%	229,819	114
Lattakia	181218	183,312	101%	196,333	108
Quneitra	38000	39,489	104%	47,319	125
Rural Damascus	202497	271,746	134%	306,121	151
Tartous	112134	117,392	105%	128,366	114
ANRWA*		13,269		12867*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2447478</b>	<b>2,532,476</b>	<b>103%</b>	<b>2,706,413</b>	<b>111</b>

\*Most of them are Palestinian children

In last three campaign Dec 2013- Feb 2014 the results shared by MoH , vaccination coverage by history was >100% but independent Monitors results indicated vaccination by history 88% and Finger Marking 63%.