

Dated: 9th March 2014

Syrian Arab Republic

Situation Report No. 13

Highlights

- Since last sitrep no any polio case confirmed.
- 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.
- Expert Review committee meeting held on dated 9th March 2014 at PHC Directorate MoH Syria, Damascus.
 - One more compatible case from Deir-z- Zour Governorate, Total # of compatible cases for 2013 is 12. Deir-ez-Zor 8, Aleppo 3 and Hasakeh 1.
 - The onset of compatible case was 17th October 2013.
- 01 more AFP cases line listed for the year 2013 raising the no of AFP cases to 166.
- 14 more AFP cases reported since last sitrep for 2014. Total # of reported AFP cases for 2014 is 38.
- Supplementary Immunizations Activities (SIAs) performed from 2nd to 6th March 2014 with bivalent bOPV in all 14 governorates.
- Compilation of result is in process.
- Two workshops for March SIAs Review, Planning for April and communication are scheduled on dated 15th-17th & 18-20th March 2014 for all 14 Governorates.

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 9th March 2014.

Epidemiological situation:

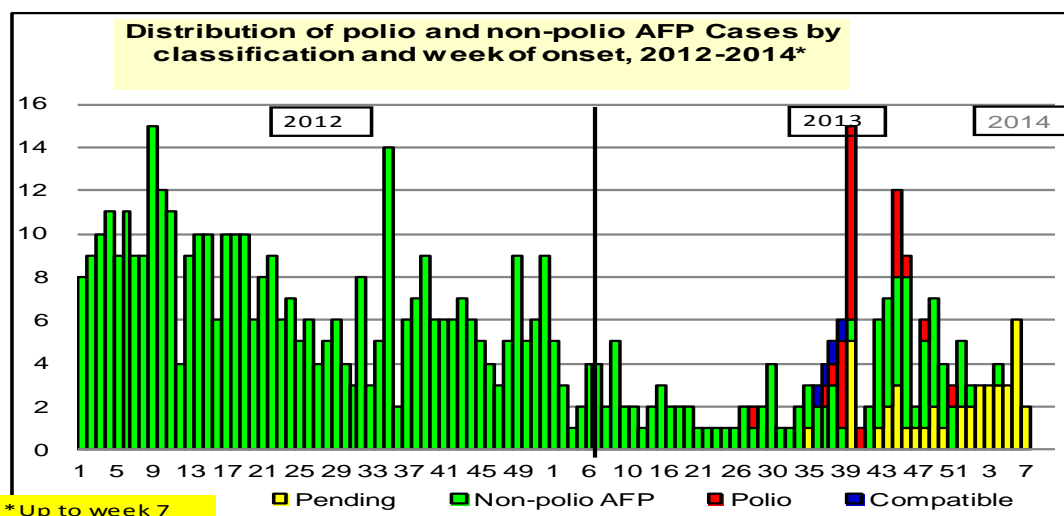
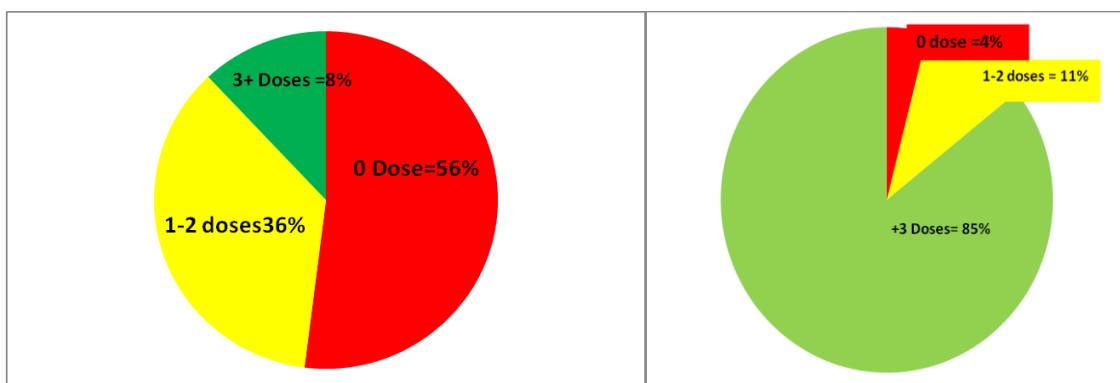
18 confirmed polio cases from Deir ez-Zour Governorate, 03 polio cases from Aleppo Governorate, 02 confirmed case from Al. Hasakeh Governorate and 2 confirmed polio cases from Idleb Governorate.

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

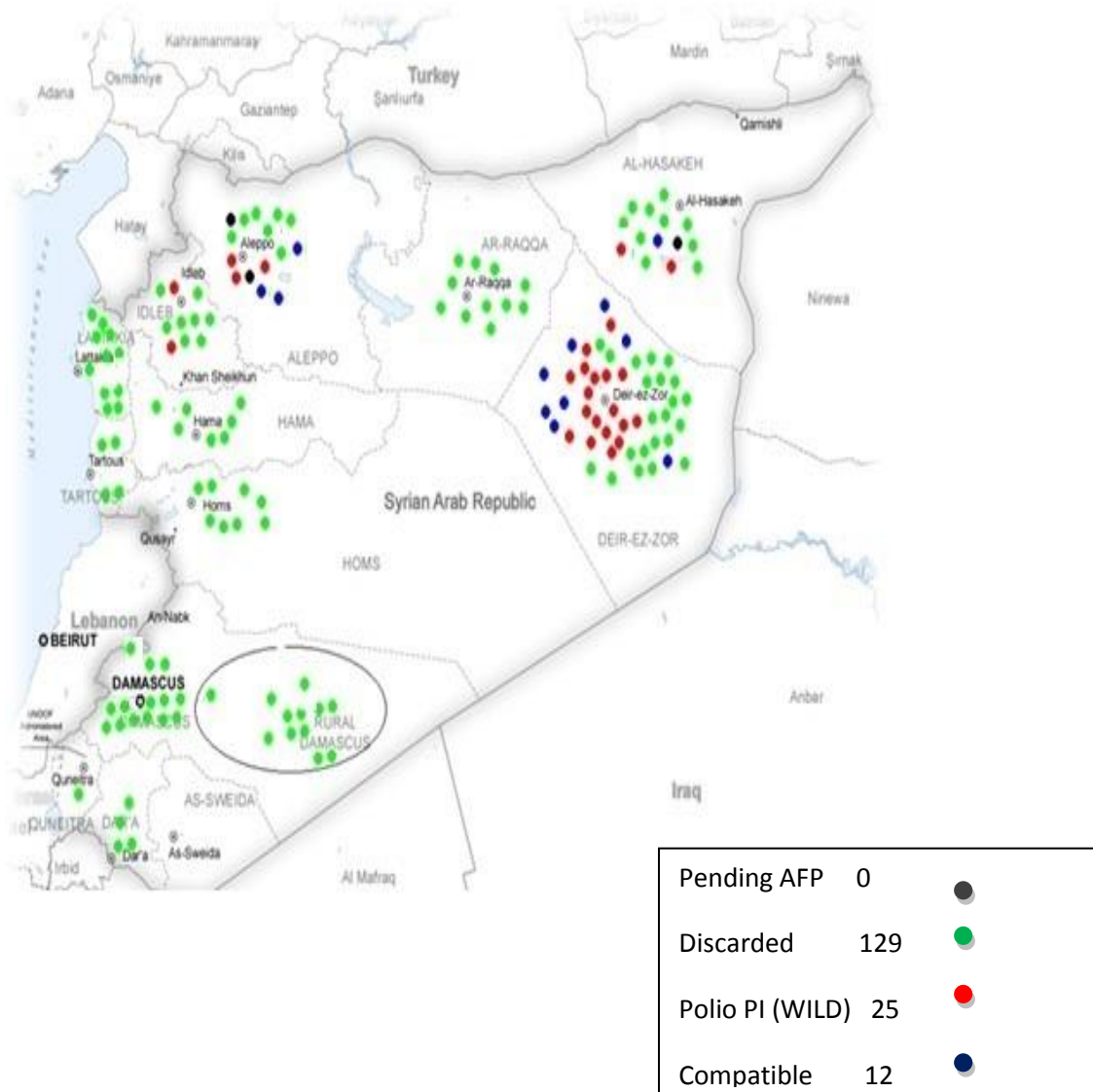
Table below shows the comparison of the polio cases and non-polio AFP cases by age group year 2013.

Age group in months	Polio cases		Non-polio AFP cases	
	No.	%	No.	%
<12	8	32%	19	13.4%
12-23	11	44%	24	17%
24-35	3	12	12	8.5%
36-47	1	4%	23	16.4%
48-59	2	8%	4	2.8%
60+	0	0%	59	41.9%
Total	25	100%	141	100%

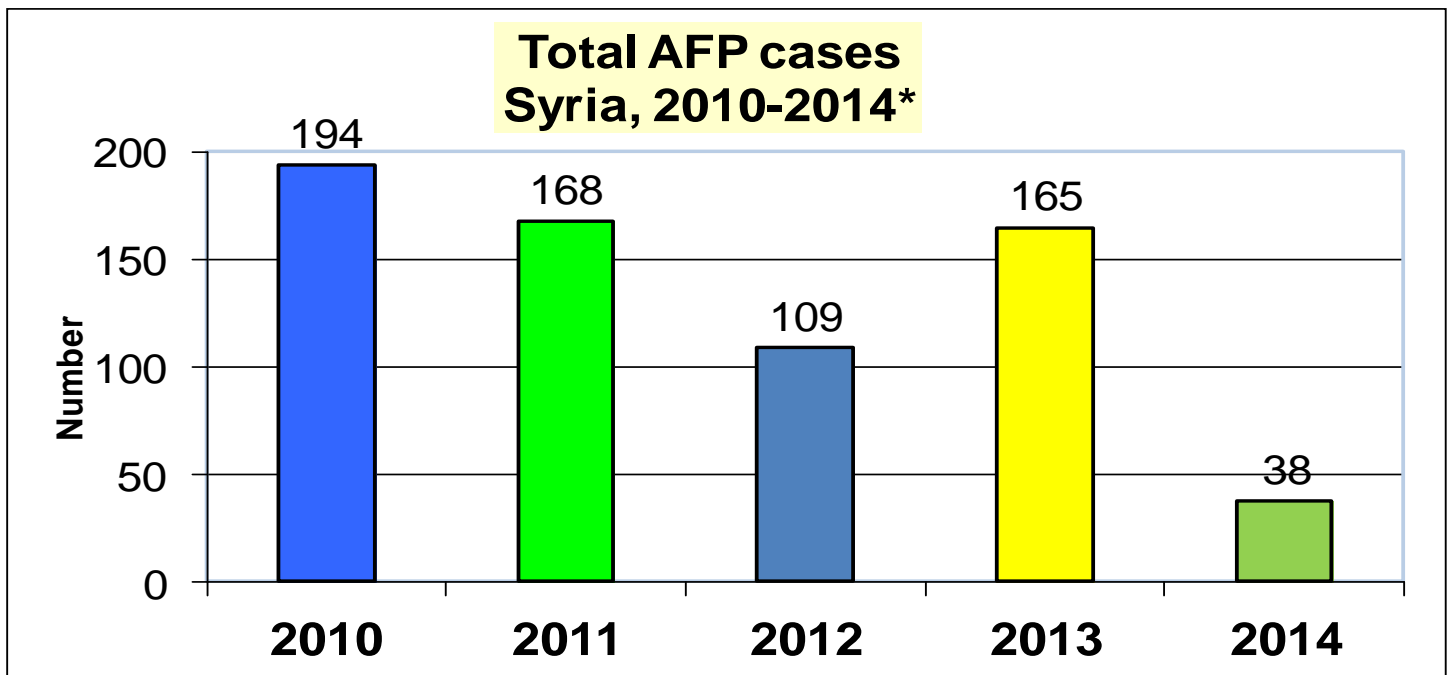
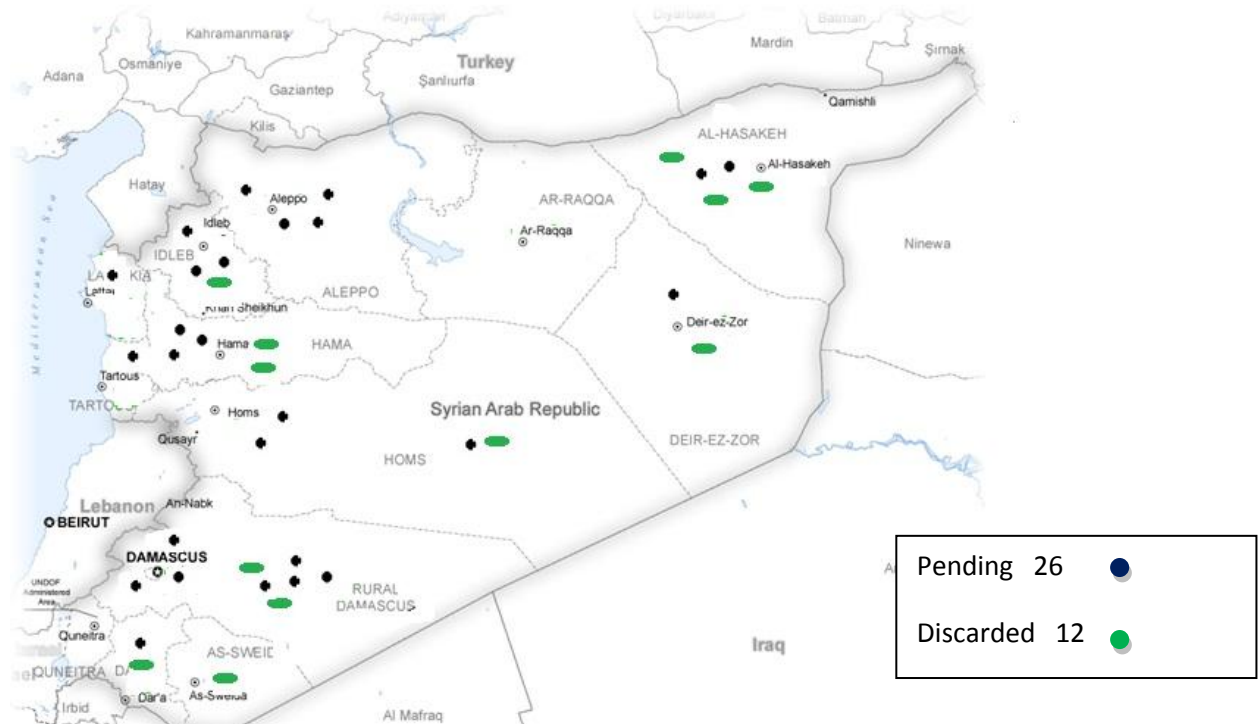
The comparison of immunity profile (diagram 1 & 2) of the polio cases and non-polio AFP cases shows the clear effect of low OPV doses.



25 Polio cases occurred in 4 Governorates. The spot map below shows the distribution of AFP cases by classification for the year 2013



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



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 20th 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 4th -8th 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, 23rd 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.
- 4th National Immunization Campaign using the bOPV implemented in all governorates from 2nd February to 6th 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 2nd 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 2014. The AFP rate reached more than 2 in 8 governorates, 1-1.9 in 4 governorates and 2 governorates are still not reported any AFP case. The national AFP rate is 2.6 per 100,000 children below 15 years of age. The adequacy rate hit the target (80 %+) in 11 governorates while 1 governorate failed to reach 80% and two governorates did not report any AFP case. EV isolation rate is 0%.

Below table indicates the status of surveillance performance indicators for the year 2014.

Governorate	POP2014 < 15	POP AT WEEK # 10	Total AFP cases	Polio	Compatible cases	Pending	Non Polio AFP cases	Annualized AFP Rate	% Adequacy	% of NPEV
ALEPPO	1923858	369,973	4			4		1.1	75%	0%
DAMASCUS	548297	105,442	3			3		2.8	100%	0%
DARA	483124	92,908	2			1	1	2.2	100%	0%
DEIR_AL_ZOUR	632476	121,630	2			1	1	1.6	100%	0%
EDLEB	662640	127,431	4			3	1	3.1	100%	0%
HAMA	622794	119,768	5			3	2	4.2	100%	0%
HASAKEH	598262	115,050	5			2	3	4.3	100%	0%
HOMS	635242	122,162	4			3	1	3.3	100%	0%
LATTAKIA	288602	55,500	1			1		1.8	100%	0%
QUNEITERA	112500	21,635	0					#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
RAQUA	454574	87,418	0					#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
RURAL_DAMASCUS	1074900	206,712	6			4	2	2.9	100%	0%
SUWAYDA	107381	20,650	1				1	4.8	100%	0%
TARTOUS	284761	54,762	1			1		1.8	100%	0%
Grand Total	8,429,411	1,621,041	38			26	12	2.3	97%	0%