

Syrian Arab Republic

Date: 14 November 2013

Situation Report No. 2

Highlights

- Since the first Sit Rep, three new polio cases were confirmed in Deir ez-Zor.
- The current vaccination campaign is still on-going.
- AFP cases search is enhanced.
- Samples from three AFP cases found positive by the National Lab in Damascus and will be sent to the Regional Lab for further analysis.
- During the 12-13 November 2013, the immunization programme conducted a planning workshop for the provincial immunization/surveillance personnel.

Syria last confirmed polio case due to an imported wild poliovirus was in 1999. Since then Syria remained polio free till October 2013 during which wild poliovirus was confirmed in Deir ez-Zor. The number of confirmed polio cases is 13 cases until the 14th November 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 current situation.

The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in collaboration with WHO 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 till today.

Epidemiological situation:

Till the issuance of this report, 13 polio cases from Deir ez-Zor are confirmed. Most of the cases are below 2 years of age and the male children are more than female children. All children, except one, had no vaccination or incomplete.

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 1. Immunity profile of the polio AFP cases

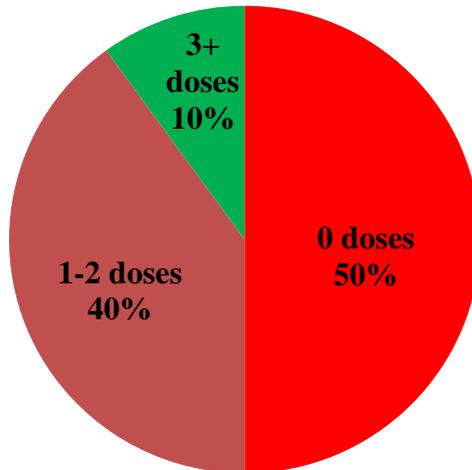
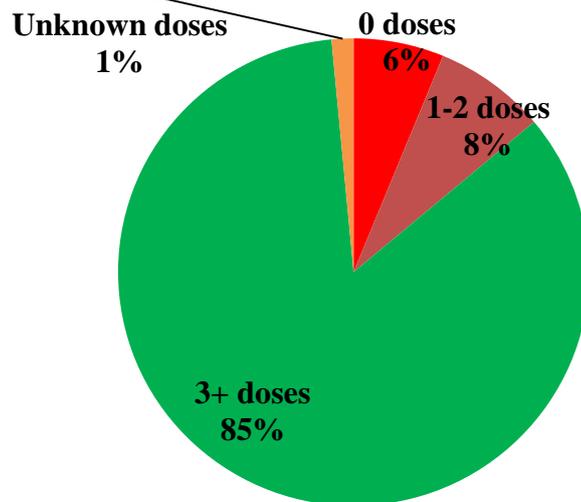
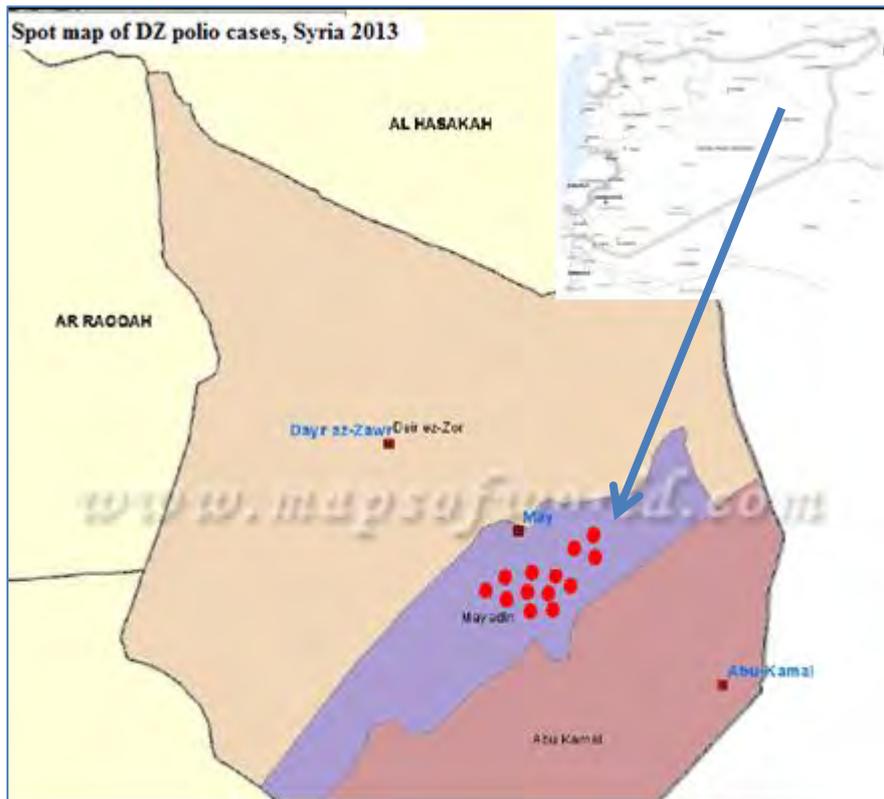


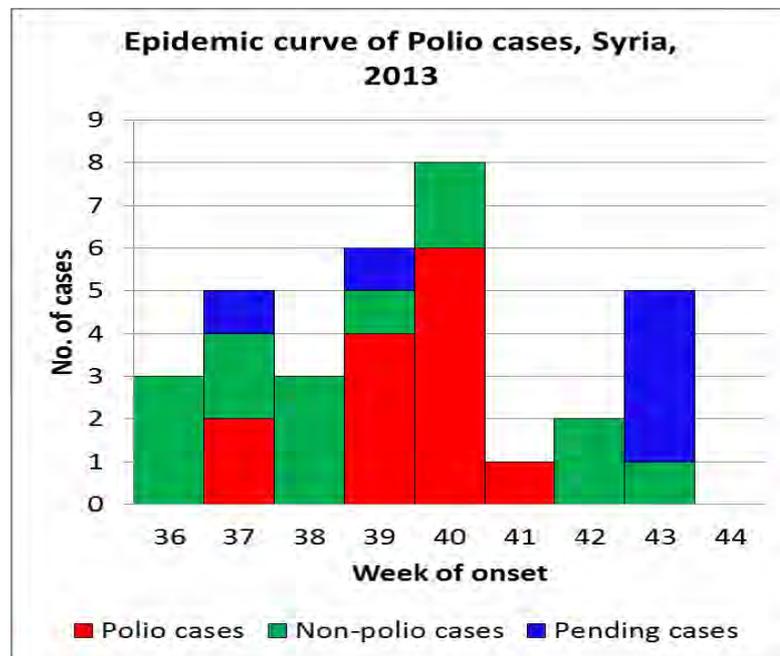
Diagram 2. Immunity profile of the non-polio AFP cases



- All the thirteen polio cases occurred in Mayadin district in Deir ez-Zor province (see the below spot map). There are additional 2 AFP cases and one contact showed positive result in the national lab in Damascus. The positive samples are going to be sent to the Regional Lab for further analysis.



- So far, the cases appeared between 10/9/2013 and 4/10/2013 (see epidemic curve).



Actions taken so far:

As a response to the re-appearance of the polio cases in Deir ez-Zor province, the programme undertook the following activities:

- The information was immediately disseminated to the MOH officials, EPI staff and partners. An urgent meeting was conducted in EPI with the support of the Dir PHC to discuss the situation and outline on the immediate activities to be done in response to this outbreak.
- All provinces were informed to be vigilant and enhance the already prepared plan of immunization campaign in October 2013.
- Coordination with national and international partners has been taken 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.

Immunization response:

- The EPI has already prepared a plan to conduct immunization campaign against polio and measles before the confirmation of the polio cases. The plan is targeting 1.6 million children under 5 for OPV and 0.9 million children under 15 for measles vaccine.
- The future supplementary immunization activity (SIA) plan includes 5 NIDs rounds in the coming 5 months. The first round (which is considered as the second round after the confirmation of polio cases in Syria) will commence on 8 December 2013. Syria will use bOPV for the first time in order to boost immunity of children very fast and interrupt the poliovirus transmission as soon as possible.
- During the 12-13 November 2013, the immunization programme conducted a planning workshop for the provincial immunization/surveillance personnel. The provincial EPI/surveillance officer with the support of the National EPI staff prepared the outline of the microplans for each province.

Surveillance response:

- All the clustered AFP cases were considered as “Hot cases” and actions taken before the arrival of the lab result. The actions included the vaccination of 2666 children in El Meyadien.
- Active surveillance has been established in governorates through WHO focal points in the different governorates and MOH surveillance officers as well daily zero reporting is activated in Deir ez-Zor.
- Sensitization of the public and private clinicians was done in order to immediately report any 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
- Sending the National AFP investigation forms to the areas of hard to reach through the partners who have access to those to those areas.