

## Syrian Arab Republic

Date: 12 December 2013

### Situation Report No. 6

#### *Highlights*

- No new WPV1 cases were reported in the past week. Advanced notification of six cases and one contact are positive L20B. Specimens were sent to the Regional Reference Polio lab for ITD analysis
- The preliminary polio vaccination result shows that 884,718 children were vaccinated during the first 3 days of December 2013 campaign.
- Seven new AFP cases from Hasakeh, Damascus and Dara have been reported.
- Two million bOPV and 0.5 million tOPV doses were distributed to all 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, Aleppo and Rural Damascus, following importation of wild poliovirus closely related to strains currently circulating in Pakistan. So far, the total number of confirmed polio cases is 17 cases.

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 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 as of 12 December.

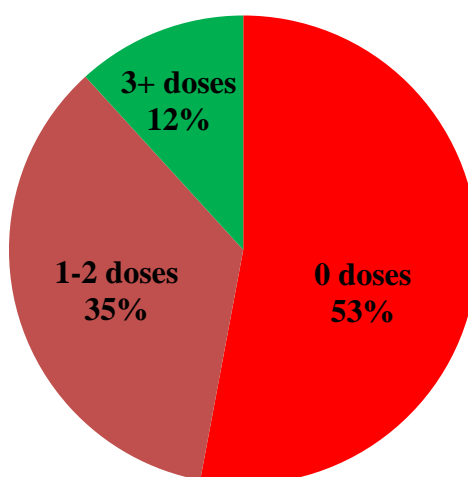
#### **Epidemiological situation:**

Fifteen polio cases from Deir ez-Zor, one case from Rural Damascus and one case from Aleppo governorates are confirmed to date. Most of the cases are below 2 years of age and the male children are more than female children. The below table shows the comparison of the polio cases and AFP cases by age group.

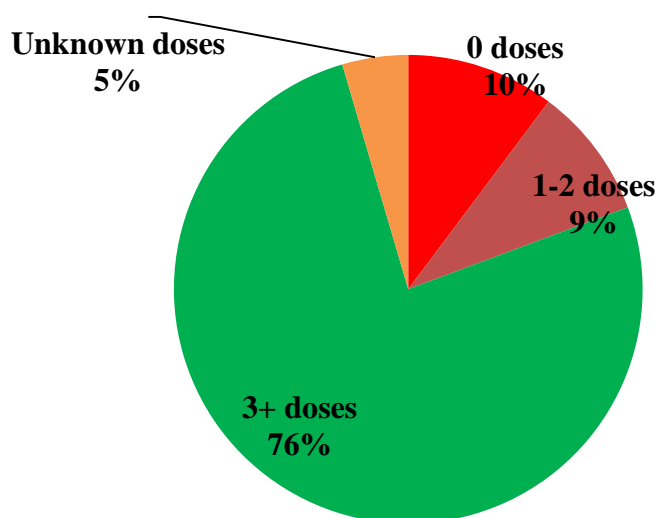
Age group in months	Polio cases		Non-polio AFP cases	
	No.	%	No.	%
<12	4	24%	18	15%
12-23	9	53%	20	17%
24-35	1	6%	11	9%
36-47	2	12%	13	11%
48-59	0	0%	5	4%
60+	1	6%	53	44%
Total	17	100%	120	100%

All children, except two, had no vaccination or incomplete vaccination. 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.

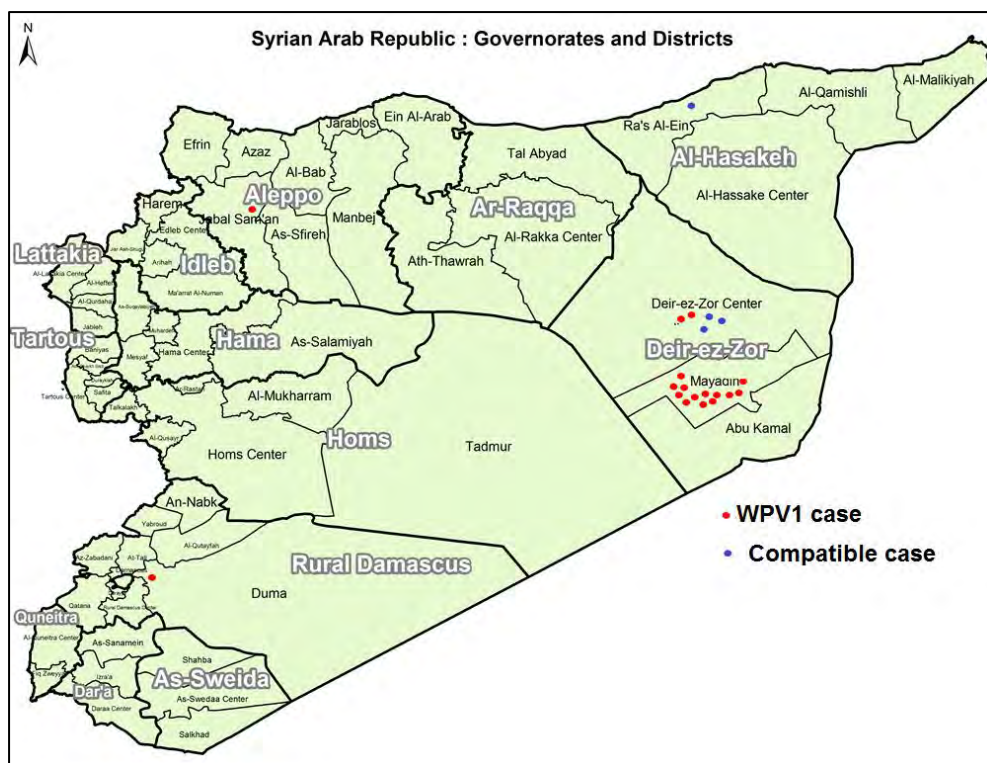
**Diagram 1. Immunity profile of the polio AFP cases**



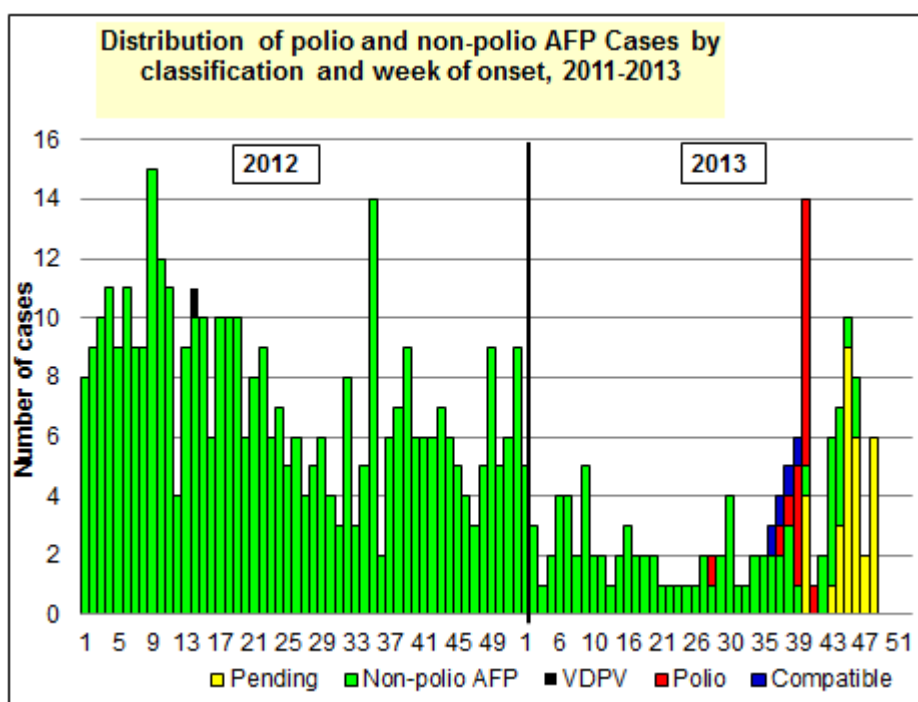
**Diagram 2. Immunity profile of the non-polio AFP cases**



- The 17 polio cases occurred in 4 districts. These are Mayadeen, Deir ez-Zor, Douma and Fardous districts (see the below spot map).



- The earliest onset of the cases detected to date is 14/7/2013 (the case from Aleppo confirmed due to positive contact samples), and the most recent case onset is 8/10/2013 (from where?) (see epidemic curve).
- Three compatible cases are present in DZ and one compatible case is in Ras Al-ien district in Hasakeh Governorate (see the above map).



### **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:

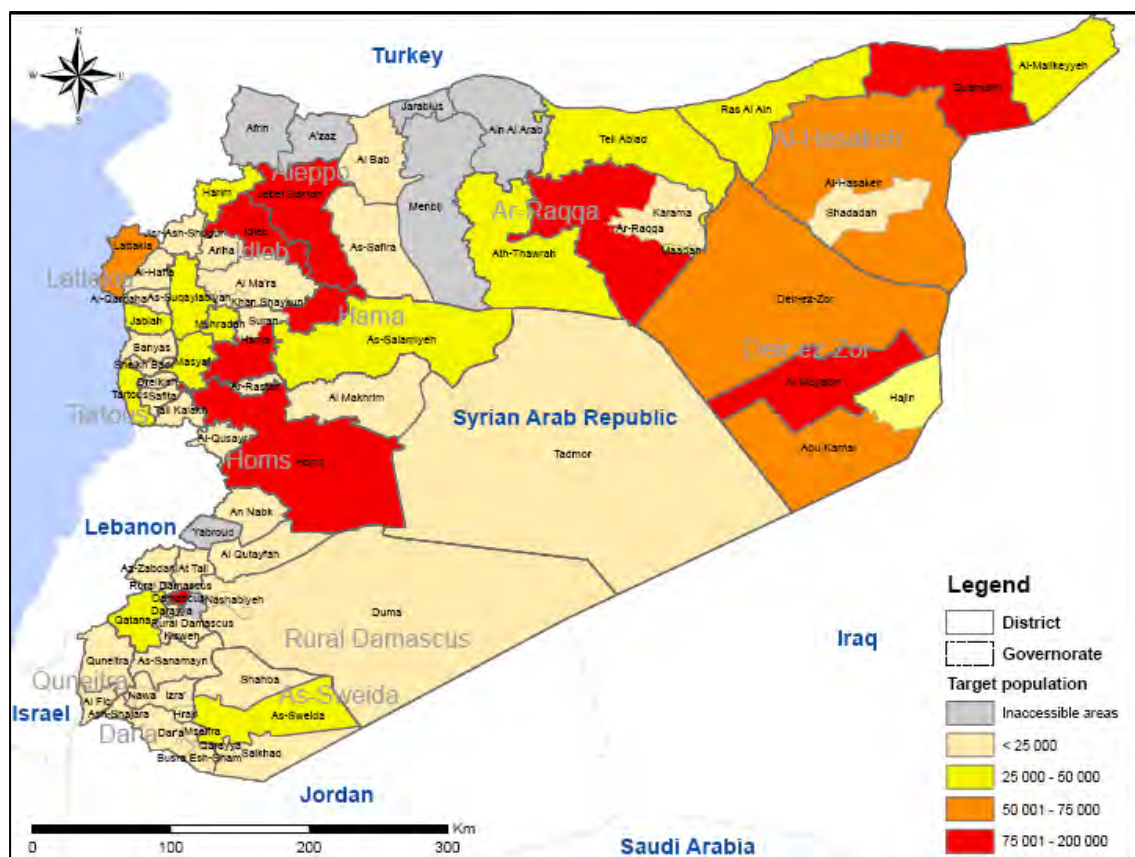
- The information was immediately disseminated to the MOH officials, EPI staff and partners. An urgent meeting was conducted by the EPI Unit with the support of the Director PHC to discuss the situation and identify the immediate activities to be done in response to this outbreak.
- All provinces were informed to be vigilant and enhance the already prepared plan for an immunization campaign in October 2013.
- 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.
- Last week, 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.

### **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) started on 8 December 2013 and continued for 5 days. The preliminary result is seen in the below table:

Governorate	Trget	<1 year	% proportion	1-5 yrs	% proportion	Total	% coverage rate
Aleppo	135,318	4,276	3%	9,956	7%	14,232	11%
Al-Hassakeh	241,204	22,703	9%	37,012	15%	59,715	25%
Ar-Raqqa	239,100		0%		0%	-	0%
As-Sweida	43,260	8,447	20%	34,234	79%	42,681	99%
Damascus	192,157	12,348	6%	39,736	21%	52,084	27%
Dara	93,000		0%		0%	4,500	5%
Deir-ez-Zor	240,090		0%		0%	83,081	35%
Hama	279,000	20,735	7%	153,486	55%	174,221	62%
Homs	155,487	13,232	9%	45,036	29%	58,268	37%
Idleb	193,900		0%		0%	52,921	27%
Lattakia	122,329	20,940	17%	91,313	75%	112,253	92%
Quneitra	38,000	5,521	15%	20,093	53%	25,614	67%
Rural Damascus	146,570	29,356	20%	95,849	65%	125,205	85%
Tartous	101,813	15,327	15%	64,616	63%	79,943	79%
TOTAL	2,221,228	152,885	7%	591,331	27%	884,718	40%

- The above result is the preliminary data of the first three days of the campaign. Due to difficulty in communication, some governorates are still collecting information on coverage. The estimated target population figure was revised following the experience of the October 2013 NIDs round.
- On 11 and 12 December, heavy snow and wind interrupted the vaccination activities in a few governorates, such Homs, Raqa and DZ.
- The below map shows the target by district and inaccessible districts as per current information. The accessibility situation is regularly changing .



### 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 facilitate 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 coordination meeting was held on 30/11/2013 for two days in Beirut. MOH, UNICEF and WHO concerned staff met and discussed the polio outbreak response. The group agreed on several action points to improve the response. These include the enhancement of the upcoming NIDs quality and also AFP surveillance. The EPI is advised to collect samples from contacts to all AFP cases regardless the adequacy of the samples.
- Last week, the surveillance system received 7 new AFP cases from Hasakeh, Damascus and Daraa governorates.
- Positive L20B specimens from 6 cases and one contact were sent to the Regional Reference Polio Lab for ITD analysis.



- A weekly AFP surveillance update is produced separately from this report. The below table shows the main AFP surveillance indicators by governorate:

**Major AFP surveillance performance indicators, up to W49, 2013**

Governorate	U 15 yrs population	Total reported AFP cases	Non-polio AFP cases	Pending classification	Polio	Compatible cases	% Adequate stools	Annualized AFP rate	% NPEV
ALEPPO	1,900,576	10	6	3	1	0	50%	0.5	20%
DAMASCUS	541,662	12	10	2	0	0	67%	2.4	0%
DARA	477,277	4	3	1	0	0	75%	0.9	0%
DEIR_AL_ZOUR	624,822	46	17	11	15	3	65%	5.3	15%
EDLEB	654,621	8	7	1	0	0	88%	1.3	0%
HAMA	615,257	4	3	1	0	0	100%	0.7	0%
HASAKEH	591,022	12	4	7	0	1	83%	2.2	8%
HOMS	627,555	6	5	1	0	0	33%	1.01	0%
LATTAKIA	285,110	9	9	0	0	0	100%	3.3	11%
QUNEITERA	38,751	1	1	0	0	0	100%	2.7	0%
RAQUA	449,073	9	7	2	0	0	67%	2.1	0%
RURAL_DAMASCUS	1,061,892	11	8	2	1	0	73%	1.0	0%
SUWAYDA	106,082	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.0	0%
TARTOUS	218,871	5	5	0	0	0	60%	2.4	20%
Total	8,192,571	137	85	31	17	4	70%	1.6	10%

**Technical assistance:**

As per the Syria outbreak response plan, the following technical assistance is considered.

Purpose	WHO	UNICEF	Status
Overall technical, managerial input and international coordination	One International Medical Officer for 3 months		In place
For rapid implementation of active AFP surveillance, materials development, training and facilitation of field operations	One international to support the AFP surveillance and coordinate with EWARN system for 3 months		Under recruitment
Planning and implementation of NIDs	One International Technical Officer for 3 months		Under recruitment
Social mobilization		1 Consultant for 6 months	Under recruitment