

Syria cVDPV2 outbreak Situation Report # 3

04 July 2017

cVDPV2 isolates in Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates, Syria, 2017



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Source: Syrian Arab Republic, Administrative map, DFS, United Nations 2012

Background

- Twenty-four (24) cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type-2 (cVDPV2) have been confirmed in Syria —22 cases are from Mayadeen (Al Mayadin) district, Deir Ez-Zor (Dayr Az Zawr) governorate, and 2 cases from Raqqa (Ar Raqqah) and Tall Abyad districts, Raqqa (Ar Raqqah) governorate. The most recent case had onset of paralysis on 28 May.
- The monovalent type 2 vaccine (mOPV2) required for the outbreak response has been released and is currently in Damascus.
- In response to the isolation of VDPV2 from Raqqa governorate, the Syrian Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF is considering adding the area to the outbreak response. This would increase the target population by almost 120,000 children under 5 years of age.
- The total number of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases detected in Deir Ez-Zor governorate since the beginning of 2017 is 72 (58 from Mayadeen; 9 from Deir Ez-Zor and 5 from Boukamal). Raqqa governorate has reported 10 AFP cases (5 each from Raqqa and Talabyad) since the beginning of the year.

Response highlights

- The national response plan has been finalized and implementation has started. Response task forces in the Damascus and Gaziantep hubs have prepared vaccination campaign micro-plans.

Summary

New cVDPV cases this week: 2
 Total number of cVDPV cases: 24
 Outbreak grade: 3

Index case

Onset of paralysis: 3 March 2017
 Location: Mayadeen, Deir Ez-Zor
 Age: 22 months
 Vaccination status: 2 OPV doses
 22 nt divergence from Sabin

Most recent cases

Mayadeen district of Deir Ez-Zor
 Onset of paralysis: 28 May 2017, age: 15 months, vaccination status: 1 OPV/ zero IPV.

Extent of outbreak

Mayadeen, Raqqa and Tell Abyad districts

Immunization response

First round expected to commence at latest by 8 July 2017

Characteristics of the cVDPV2 cases

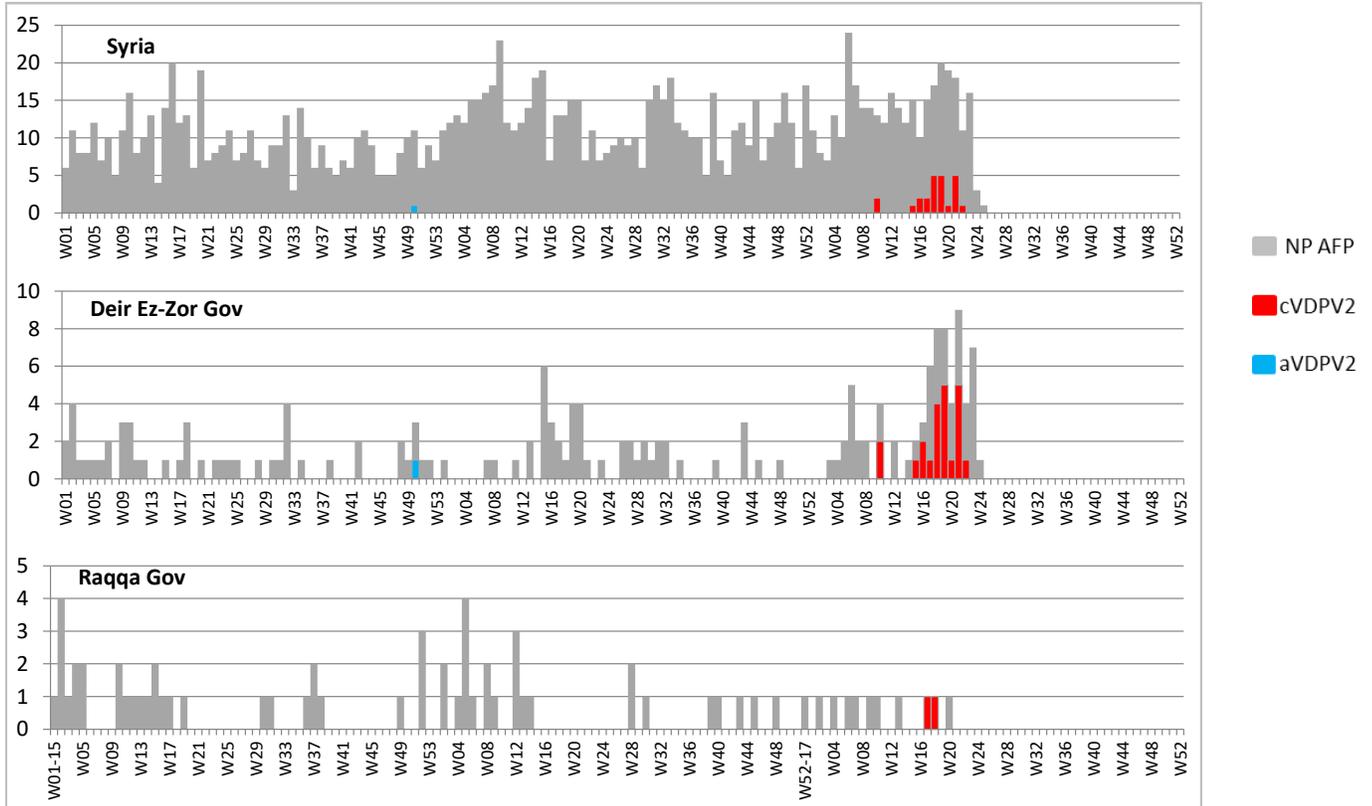
Median age: 15 months
 Gender ratio male-female: 1:2
 Vaccination status of the cases:
 • IPV: 4 cases (18%) received IPV
 • OPV: 42% zero dose, 32% have received 1-2 doses

Distribution of non-polio AFP (NPAFP) and vaccine-derived poliovirus type-2 (VDPV2), Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates, 2017

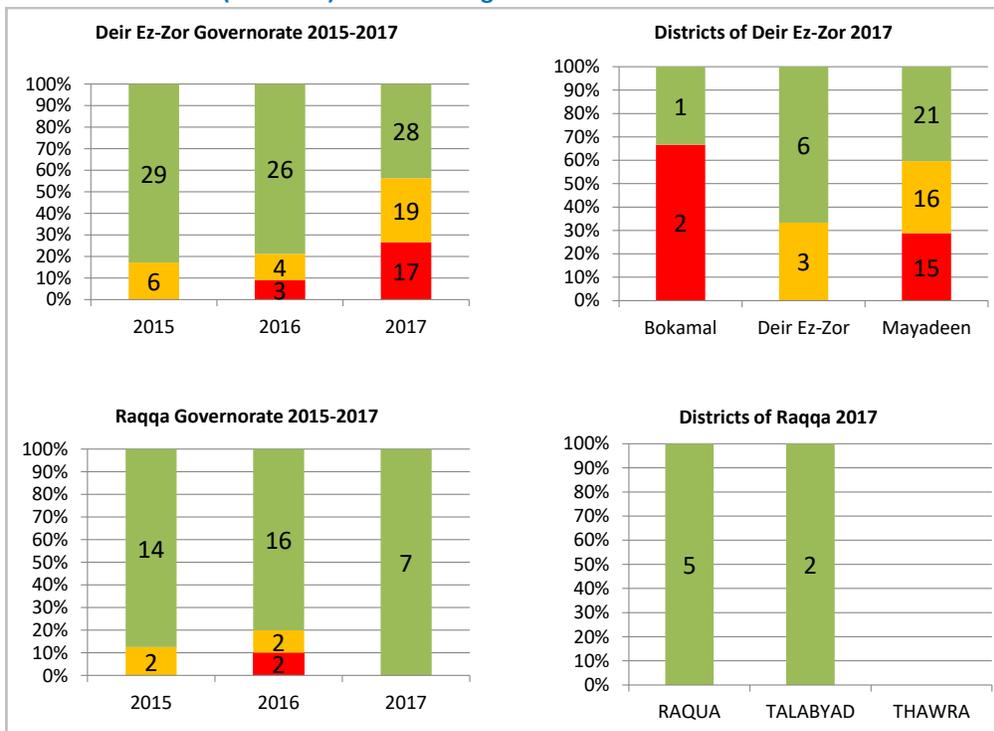
Gov.	Deir Ez-Zor		Raqqa	
	NPAFP	VDPV2	NPAFP	VDPV2
Jan	2		2	
Feb	11		3	
Mar	6	2	1	
Apr	13	3	2	1
May	29	17	2	1
Jun	11			
Total	72	22	10	2

- Administrative clearance for transport of the vaccine to Deir Ez-Zor is in progress. UNICEF has initiated procurement of IPV which will be used in the second immunization round together with mOPV2.
- Communication for Development (C4D) activities commenced this week.

EPI Curve NPAFP & VDPV2 Cases, 2015-2017



Vaccination status (OPV+IPV) AFP cases* aged 6-59 months



* VDPV2 cases are included

Immunization response activities

- Two immunization rounds are planned for early July and August targeting children <5 years in Deir Ez-Zor governorate and in the southern part of Shadadi district in Hasaka governorate. A response in Raqqa is still under discussion due to ongoing military operations.
- Emergency operation centers (EOCs) in both Damascus and Gaziantep hubs continue to monitor the outbreak situation
- UNICEF MENA/WHO EMRO have established emergency operation centers in Amman to coordinate outbreak response with both Damascus and Gaziantep hubs and partners.

First round

- Vaccine: mOPV2, total target: 328,00 (196,000 resident children and 110,000 refugee children in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, and 22,000 children in Shadadi).
- A total of 355 vaccination teams and 61 supervisors are on standby for this activity. Campaign strategy is house to house in the affected villages and fixed posts in other areas. There are 5 vaccine distribution centers with adequate cold chain in Bokamal, Hajien, Husienieh, Mayadeen, and Sor. These centers will distribute vaccine to all supervisors and collect empty vials on a daily basis. A special monitoring format has been developed to record vials distributed, used and empty vials returned. Forms will be completed at all levels on a daily basis and WHO will provide a daily summary to Damascus.
- QRC is negotiating for permission to implement campaign monitoring.
- WHO and UNICEF are updating neighboring countries on the cVDPV2 outbreak situation in Syria and are requesting them to strengthen immunization and surveillance activities in high-risk areas.

Coordination and surge support

- Syria's Vice Minister for Health recently met with WHO and UNICEF teams to discuss the situation in Raqqa. Coordination among national authority and partners to complete preparations for the response in Deir Ez-Zor is ongoing. The Ministry of Health is completing the vaccine request forms. The target number of children under 5 in Raqqa is around 120,000 children for mOPV2 and 44,000 for IPV. A communication plan is being prepared for Raqqa response.
- Close coordination between WHO and UNICEF is in place, with daily information exchange between regional offices in Amman, and Damascus and Gaziantep hubs.
- Both WHO and UNICEF teams have deployed additional human resources (surge support) to both hubs since the start of the outbreak. **WHO EMRO:** Two senior polio staff were deployed to Damascus to support the finalization of the national outbreak response plan. Staff have facilitated two training workshops for all governorates, reviewed micro-plans and are working to improve national polio lab data management. One regional polio consultant has been deployed to support the Gaziantep office for a period of two months. **UNICEF MENARO:** A senior level mission was sent to Damascus to support outbreak response activities and a STOP consultant and C4D specialist completed surge missions in Gaziantep to support C4D planning. An immunization specialist from Jordan country office has been deployed to support the Gaziantep team for one month. A senior C4D specialist from UNICEF HQ is on mission to the region to review communication plans for the response. The UNICEF MENARO Polio Coordinator is on mission to Gaziantep to discuss the Raqqa outbreak response with the Gaziantep hub and finalize HR support to the UNICEF hub office for an extended response.

C4D and social mobilization activities

- A strategic communication plan is being finalized based on available social data and experience from immunization activities conducted in this area over the past 2-3 years.
- Recruitment of 250 social mobilisers and 55 influencers/campaign leaders is underway, to conduct house to house visits prior to the campaign. Mayadeen will have highest number (88) of community mobilizers supported by 11 campaign supervisors. House to house visits by community mobilizers will also be carried out in the informal settlements of Bedouins in the desert of Badiya, including the following settlements: Huweijet, Alghabra, Muiezlieh, Sihen, Albutten. Community visits, public meetings and health center visits will be conducted in other areas.

- 80,000 brochures, 12,000 posters, 55 guides on interpersonal communication skills and 300 campaign uniforms arrived in Deir Ez-Zor on 22 June. Messaging is being reviewed and campaign materials will be distributed to key health facilities.
- These social mobilization teams will visit each household before the immunization campaigns begin, and conduct another visit during the campaign to identify if all children are being vaccinated, and establish reasons for non-vaccination. Social mobilizers will report on missed children to influencers, including any suspected cases of hiding children, vaccine refusal etc. Influencers are responsible for ensuring all children get vaccinated, and if they are not able to vaccinate the situation will be managed by the campaign management team, made up of six doctors.
- These six local doctors in Deir Ez-Zor are providing support to C4D interventions. An interview with one of these doctors has been approved to air on local radio, encouraging community uptake of polio vaccination.
- A public service announcement for radio has been finalized, and will be recorded this week. Air spots will prepare people for the campaign. Monitoring forms have been reviewed and revised.

Media

- WHO hosted a Facebook live Q&A session with Dr Michel Zaffran, Director, Polio Eradication on 29 June, on responding to circulating vaccine derived poliovirus type 2 in Syria. (<http://www.facebook.com/WHO>)
- On 18 June, the Syrian Government delivered a press release concerning the polio outbreak in rural Deir Ez-Zor, including the preparations for two rounds of immunization in the governorate in July. The statement was published on Government News Agency (SANA) website.
- A national media workshop for Damascus-based media was held by the Ministry of Health on 20 June to explain campaign key messages, campaign preparations and the media's supporting role through accurate information dissemination. [More information.](#)

Challenges

Potential escalation in active conflict/s and shifts in power on the ground could result in:

- inability to dispatch the vaccine to health facilities and inability to conduct house to house vaccination
- compromised safety of vaccinators and/or vaccinators becoming unreachable
- loss of mOPV2 vials and damage to cold chain
- inability to conduct necessary vaccinator training, e.g. social mobilization

Vaccine refusal has been a considerable challenge in Deir Ez-Zor in the past. Some families are very reluctant to have their children vaccinated with IPV. C4D is working to address this issue.

Relevant links

- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative \(GPEI\) website](#), updated weekly
- [Responding to an outbreak of VDPV video](#)
- [What is vaccine-derived polio?](#)
- [GPEI factsheet—VDPV](#)

For more information:

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