

Kabul, May 27, 2018

A new polio case has been confirmed this week in Shahwalikot district of Kandahar province, bringing the total number of confirmed polio cases in Afghanistan to 8 during 2018.

The paralyzed child is a 14-month-old girl in an area where vaccination teams face challenges in accessing the area. The child has never been vaccinated against polio due to the family refusing the vaccine.

“This is an important reminder to all parents that polio is a real and serious health risk. Polio paralyzes for life, and the only way to protect your child is to vaccinate them during every polio campaign,” Minister of Public Health Dr. Ferozudin Feroz stated.

Shahwalikot district currently has the highest number of polio cases in one district in the world. Last year the district had five polio cases and this new case is the third case in Shahwalikot in 2018.

A national team has been deployed to conduct a detailed investigation and risk assessment of the case to prepare for the necessary outbreak response vaccination activities

The polio virus is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure and the polio vaccine is the only safe and effective way to protect children. While there is even one child anywhere with polio, all children are at risk of this crippling disease. The oral polio vaccine builds up immunity gradually and multiple doses are required for a child to be fully protected. Every dose further strengthens a child’s immunity against the virus.

The Polio Eradication Initiative is a global public health intervention that aims to eradicate polio worldwide and protect all future generations of children from paralysis.

Currently, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria are the only three remaining polio-endemic countries in the world.

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