

**Kabul, 2 July 2018** – A new polio case has been reported in Helmand province. A three-year-old child from Nad-e-Ali district, an area inaccessible to vaccination teams in May, has been affected and will be permanently paralyzed.

During the last national vaccination campaign, vaccination bans were in place in Helmand, Urozgan and Kandahar, resulting in over 900,000 missed children, the boy being one of them.

Responding to the new case, the Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz said: “This new case should show every parent that polio is serious and we need to reach every child under five years old with vaccines in every round.”

A Sub-national immunization days (SNIDs) campaign for polio eradication is being carried out this week in 225 high risk districts of 27 provinces, primarily in southern and eastern parts of the country, including Kabul city. The campaign starts today and continues until Friday. Vaccinators will visit 6.4 million children under the age of five.

The Minister added: “The high transmission season for polio has started in Afghanistan, and this is the first campaign conducted during this time, when children are most vulnerable to getting the virus.”

The minister expressed his concern over the possibility of missing children in this vaccination round. “Our primary reports show, that in this round of the campaign, around 1,347,000 children could be deprived from polio vaccine in Helmand, Urozgan, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Kumar and Kunduz provinces, where the anti-government elements are not supporting the implementation of campaign.”

599, 483 children in Helmand, 360,678 in Kunduz and 186,410 children in Urozgan provinces, areas which have already had polio cases this year, could be missed. Recently, two positive environmental samples of wild poliovirus have been reported from Jalalabad and Kandahar cities. This indicates a heightened threat for contracting poliovirus in these areas, if children will be not vaccinated during the campaign.

The minister further emphasized the neutrality of polio vaccination campaigns. “The reason why we vaccinate regularly is because the vaccine builds immunity gradually, and multiple doses are needed to build strong protection. I would also like to stress that this is a non-partisan campaign to protect every Afghan child from paralysis. A child’s health should never be politicized.”

This is the 9th case in Afghanistan – the country with the highest number of wild polio cases in the world. The polio vaccine is the only way to protect children from infection.

All children who miss vaccination should visit their local health centre, where the vaccine is available free of charge. The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is very important that these children with a lower immunity get the vaccine, because they are more susceptible to the virus.

Polio vaccination has also been strongly endorsed by national and global Islamic scholars.

Polio 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. All children should be vaccinated against polio during each campaign, until they reach the age of five. House-to-house vaccination is the only way to achieve polio eradication because it means every child has access to vaccination. This strategy has been implemented in all countries, and has proven efficacy.

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

Nine polio cases have been reported from Afghanistan in 2018, one from Helmand and Nangarhar, two from Kunar and five from Kandahar. In 2017, 14 polio cases were reported.

***For more information:***

**Dr Maiwand Ahmadzai, Director, Polio Emergency Operations Center, [maiwand.aa@gm](mailto:maiwand.aa@gm)**

[ail.com](http://ail.com)  
926 2724

; +93 79

Saturday 17th of May 2025 02:09:27 PM