



Kabul, 5 November 2018 – Today, polio vaccination teams will visit 5.3 million children under the age of five in 18 high-risk provinces, mainly in South and East provinces. This follows several new cases in both regions. Most recently three polio positive cases have been reported from southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan and the total polio positive cases in this year reaches 19 cases: 9 in Kandahar, 3 in Helmand, 1 in Urozgan, 3 in Kunar, 2 in Nangarhar and 1 in Nuristan.

“ In Afghanistan, the efforts for polio eradication have been intensified more than ever. The Ministry of Public Health and its health partners are committed to ending this disease. But what we need is the solid commitment and necessary cooperation of the community. If the community do not cooperate with us, we will not be able to reach every child with lifesaving

polio vaccine. Whenever a child misses the vaccine, they can be impacted by polio. I request all parents, community leaders, Mullah Imam of the mosques and tribal elders to cooperate with vaccinators to ensure that all children are vaccinated and protected against this paralyzing disease. I would also like to remind everyone that the vaccine is safe.” said the Minister of Public Health Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz.

The vaccination campaign will take place from 5 - 9 November 2018. Parents should ensure their children are home and available to be vaccinated. All children under five should receive the polio vaccine, including newborns, sleeping, sick, and visiting children. Children who miss the vaccination should visit their local health centre as soon as possible, where the vaccine is available and free of charge. The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is very important these children get the vaccine, because they have lower immunity which makes them more susceptible to the virus. Repeated vaccination is crucial for children to build up immunity against the virus.

Vaccinating children against polio is the responsibility and obligation of every Muslim. The prominent Islamic Scholars and Reliable Islamic References from Afghanistan and globally have issued Fatwas on the importance of vaccination against polio

Polio is a crippling and a 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 that have managed to eradicate the virus.

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

The Ministry of Public Health urges parents and caregivers to ensure no child misses the vaccine, as this is the only protection from polio and permanent paralysis.

For more information:

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