



Kabul, 30 October 2018 –Three new polio cases have been reported in the south and east regions of Afghanistan. A 5-month old female child from Paroon district of Nuristan, a 24-month-old female child from Nawzad district of Helmand, and a 14 months old female child from Miwand district of Kandahar have been paralysed by the polio wild virus. The total numbers of the polio cases in Afghanistan reaches to 19 cases this year. Thirteen cases have been reported in the south and 6 cases in the east (9 cases in Kandahar, 3 cases in Helmand, 1 case in Uruzgan, 3 cases in Kunar, 2 cases in Nangarhar and 1 case from Nuristan provinces).

The Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz expressed his deep concern that Afghanistan now has the highest number of polio cases in the world: “We now have more polio cases than last year. This is serious. Yet the young girls have been needlessly paralysed by polio. This should never have happened. We are particularly concerned about the spread of the virus in Helmand and stress that all parents and caregivers must repeatedly vaccinate all their children under five. Polio is serious and has lifelong consequences, but the virus can be eradicated from our country.”

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 effective 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 effective.

The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is very important these children get the vaccine, because they have low immunity which makes them more susceptible to the virus.

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

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

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