



WHO staff member provides reassurance to a young girl after vaccination

Baghdad, 1 April 2019 – The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO, completed a 10-day vaccination campaign to immunize children aged from 9 to 59 months in Iraq against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) from 10 to 24 March 2019.

The campaign aimed to protect a large number of children and reduce the risk of severe and deadly MMR outbreaks in the country. It also forms a critical part of Iraq's ongoing work to protect all populations against MMR epidemics, in alignment with the global measles and rubella strategic plan 2012–2020.

Stressing the importance of vaccinating every child, Dr Adham Ismail, acting WHO Representative in Iraq, praised the enthusiastic approach by Ministry of Health teams and said, “We acknowledge the commitment and cooperation of the health authorities in Iraq to ensure that Iraqi children are protected with a quality vaccine which will contribute to health security and a safer world”.



Unsung hero Mowafaq Salem Addai, head nurse at the Muqdadiya sub-health centre of the Diyala Health Directorate, crosses the Khiresan River near Diaba village. A subnational vaccination round against MMR has already been successfully implemented in 2 phases. Phase I was conducted between 3 and 11 September 2018 and covered 10 provinces. Phase II targeted 2 592 858 children aged 9–59 months in 9 provinces (Baghdad-Kerkh, Baghdad-Resafa, Diyala, Wassit, Diwania, Muthanna, ThiQar, Missan and Basra) over 10 days. 6490 vaccinators participated in this campaign, in addition to 646 team supervisors.

The campaign is part of the vaccination strategy to strengthen immunity against MMR.

Vaccination teams went house to house to ensure that all targeted children were covered. They visited slums, settlements for internally displaced persons and other areas in which marginalized communities reside to promote vaccination.

WHO provided technical and financial support for the operational costs of this campaign, which was monitored by independent Iraqi Red Cross Society's monitoring teams and 6 WHO Technical Officers. The WHO Baghdad office team attended the opening ceremony of the vaccination campaign at a local health centre and walked with vaccinators in the Otaifiya neighbourhood monitoring the vaccination of a large number of children.



Vaccinators cross marshes by boat in Missan Thanks to the strong commitment of the Government and dedication of frontline health workers, there has been a significant improvement in overall population immunity in Iraq as a result of the efforts made by the central Ministry of Health, Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Regional Government and Departments of Health. Vaccination is the most cost-effective public health intervention and will maintain and

strengthen the population's immunity against MMR.

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