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Campaign aims to reach 600 000 over 3 weeks

The Ministry of Health of Jordan, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and UNHCR has initiated a comprehensive measles campaign in the northern governorates of Irbid and Mafrq.

Since the beginning of 2013 there have been a total number of 39 cases of measles in both Mafrq (16 in the Al Zaatari refugee camp, and 4 in the community), and Irbid (19 in the community). The large number of Syrian refugees in both governorates has meant that the spread of the disease is of major concern to WHO and its partners.

To prepare for the campaign, health care workers from the two northern governorates have been specifically trained on the administration of vaccinations in emergency situations. A large-scale advocacy and social mobilization campaign also took place with posters, radio spots and messages from local community leaders.

In its first week, the campaign has immunized 281 494 children aged between 6 months and 15 years, with nearly 10% of the total beneficiaries coming from the Syrian refugee community.

The influx of Syrian refugees into the two northern governorates continues to put health care facilities under strain. The increased caseload has meant that most of the smaller community health centres are struggling to cope, citing a lack of resources and man power as the most problematic areas.

Dr Sabri Gmach, a WHO epidemiologist stated:

“With this large-scale measles vaccination campaign it is hoped that over 600 000 children can be targeted across the north of Jordan. Measles is a devastating disease and it is vital for WHO and the Ministry of Health to be preventative. The number of 34 cases since the beginning of the year is proportionally a very serious figure. Our goal is to eradicate the disease from Jordan, and the only way to do that is to vaccinate the most vulnerable people – the children and young adults.” Dr Gmach said that preparation for the campaign had been comprehensive. “The macro and micro planning was exceptionally detailed, there will always be uncertainties, but I feel that this campaign has the foundations to be very successful. Already we are surpassing out targets, which means our planning and preparation is always changing, but it is very pleasing to see.”

The planned timeframe for the measles campaign is between 8 June and 4 July, 2013.

For a more detailed account of the campaign please contact [WHO Jordan country office](#) .

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Saturday 23rd of August 2025 11:47:25 PM