

Cairo, 9 April 2019 –The World Health Organization expresses its shock and dismay at the killing of a dedicated frontline polio worker in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan.

Mr Wajid Ali, who was a staff member of the Kamali Union Council of Tehsil Haleemzai in Mohmand District since April 2017, was shot and killed while he was supporting polio eradication and immunization efforts in Pakistan on 8 April 2019.

“We strongly condemn this and any attack targeting health care staff like Mr Ali, who are working hard to rid the world of polio and other diseases,” said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.” Health care should never be a target and WHO and our partners will not be deterred by such attacks. We will continue our efforts to work with the Government of Pakistan, UNICEF, and other partners to eradicate polio and ensure the highest possible level of health for all the people of Pakistan.”

Pakistan is one of 3 countries globally where polio remains endemic. The others are Afghanistan and Nigeria. Efforts to eradicate polio have been hindered by attacks such as these.

“We are devastated by this tragic news and extend our sincere condolences to Mr Ali’s family and friends,” said Dr Ni’ma Abid, Acting WHO Representative for Pakistan. “The only tribute we can pay to those who have sacrificed their lives to protect Pakistani children from the death and lifelong disability polio brings, is to complete their mission and eradicate polio from Pakistan.”

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