



23 October 2019 – World Polio Day on 24 October 2019 arrives at a critical moment for the programme worldwide, and especially in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. It's no secret that 2019 has been a tough year for our Region, with more than 80 children paralyzed by wild poliovirus in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As the polio programmes in the 2 endemic countries make the changes needed to achieve eradication, the rest of the Region – and the globe – are pulling together to celebrate the ground covered so far, and move forward with ever greater determination to end polio forever.

We're proud to celebrate many heroes of polio eradication across the Region. Health workers, vaccinators and donors are the people who make this programme work, and without their hard work, we'd be lost. One of the regional heroes we are proud to salute is polio worker [Mohamed Shire](#),

who is working to eradicate a second disease, after being part of the group that vanquished smallpox in 1977. Another is

[Abdullahi Mahamed Noor](#)

, who uses basketball to educate parents about the importance of polio vaccination.

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, [polio heroes](#) are going the distance to vaccinate children in the most difficult of circumstances. The Afghanistan programme celebrates

[four truly dedicated individuals](#)

, who have 56 years of work for the programme between them. In Pakistan, events across the country are celebrating those making a significant contribution to polio eradication. On this day,

WHO gives special thanks to

[Rotarians](#)

, who have been a heroic partner in the quest to eradicate polio and whose support is behind much of what we do.

We're also celebrating progress, and the incredible journey we have made since 1988, when 350 000 children each year lost their mobility to polio. We are 99% of the way there. A significant milestone is the announcement of the eradication of the [type 3 strain of wild poliovirus](#). This is an important step in the global effort to rid the world of all poliovirus strains and ensure that no child will ever again be paralyzed by any poliovirus anywhere.

Follow all events from World Polio Day 2019 by searching the [#WorldPolioDay](#) and [#EndPolio](#) hashtags on social media, and by visiting

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