



Dr Ghulam Popal, WHO Representative to Somalia, and Minister of Health Dr Fawziya Abikar Nor vaccinate a child against polio during the second focused campaign in Banadir, Lower and Middle Shabelle regions

Mogadishu, 29 January 2018 |A second round of polio vaccination was launched at a ceremony today chaired by the Somali Federal Ministry of Health, with the participation of WHO and UNICEF. The campaign will run up until 4 February and aims to reach more than 726,000 children under five years of age in accessible areas of Banadir, Lower and Middle Shabelle regions.

Somalia has not reported a case of wild poliovirus since August 2014, however the country remains at high risk of resurgence. An initial immunization round was successfully carried out in December 2017. A second high quality round will help ensure all children under five receive the necessary vaccine to protect them against this preventable disease. Surveillance efforts have also been bolstered in the region.

During the launch of the round the Federal Minister of Health Dr Fawziya Abiikar praised vaccinators, health workers and volunteers for their ongoing commitment to ensure Somalia stays polio-free, at times risking their own lives. She reiterated the leadership of the government for Polio free Somalia and expressed her gratitude to the partners for their continuous support.

The round will be supported by around 3,500 personnel including vaccinators, social mobilizers, monitors and supervisors. To help provide accurate, timely, and comprehensive information about vaccination activities, Open Data Kit (ODK) mobile data collection tools have been developed and will be put to use. More than 200 supervisors and monitors have been trained on the data collection platform.

Conflict and insecurity has continued to hinder access to children in Somalia during polio immunization campaigns, with approximately 240,000 children under five years of age reported as not accessible for more than a year.

WHO Representative to Somalia Dr Ghulam Popal said the commitment and leadership of the government in responding to the ongoing risks to polio reemerging and ensuring no child is denied the right to be vaccinated, should be commended.

“This is the second vaccination round being in Somalia in as many months. It is critical to ensure we close any immunity gaps,” said Dr Popal, at the event. “It is important that all children under five in these areas, regardless of immunization status, are vaccinated to protect them [against polio], and we urge all families to ensure vaccination of their children,” he added.

**Related link**

[Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

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