POLIO GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE

SITUATION REPORT

MENA EMR REGIONAL CVDPV OUTBREAKS

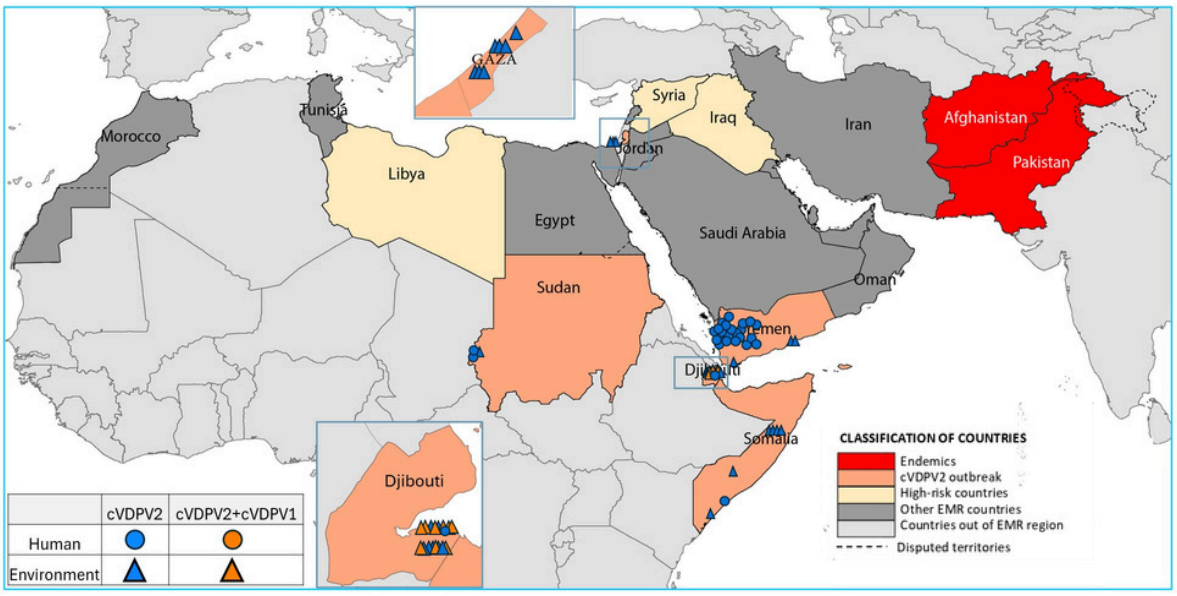
Issue #43 | Week 33 (starting 9 August 2025) - Week 46 (ending 20 November 2025)

OVERVIEW

Across the Region, countries continue efforts to close immunity gaps and stop variant poliovirus outbreaks amid complex and often fragile contexts. Following the recent budget cuts across the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), efforts are ongoing to prioritize highest-risk geographies for outbreak response, focusing on the quality of campaigns and adjusting plans to the current funding landscape, while advancing implementation of the 2026 GPEI Global Action Plan in true letter and spirit.

Regional coordination between countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and Africa (AFRO) has strengthened in 2025. The Horn of Africa and Lake Chad Basin coordination meetings resumed in the last quarter of the year, helping countries align surveillance and vaccination efforts across borders.

Poliovirus in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2025



Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus detections in the EMR Region, 2025

Country	2025			
	Number of cases (Human)	Most recent date of detection	Number of detections from the environment	Most recent date of detection
cVDPV2				
Djibouti	1	12 Jan 2025	17	18 May 2025
oPt	-	-	7	5 Mar 2025
Somalia	1	21 Jun 2025	6	27 Aug 2025
Sudan	2	8 Feb 2025	1	16 Apr 2025
Yemen*	29	26 Mar 2025	9	27 Jul 2025
cVDPV1				
Djibouti	-		10**	18 May 2025

Note: *Sample shipments from the northern governorates have stalled from March 2025 onwards

**Nine wastewater samples from Djibouti are co-infected with cVDPV1 and cVDPV2; and one sample has cVDPV1

COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

DJIBOUTI: STRENGTHENING CHILDREN'S IMMUNITY

Djibouti is responding to twin outbreaks of type 1 and type 2 circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), following confirmation of cVDPV2 in 2024 and ongoing cVDPV1 detections in wastewater. The most recent positive cVDPV1 sample, collected in May 2025, is genetically linked to earlier virus isolates detected in the country.

The country is now intensifying efforts to strengthen children's immunity against both types of poliovirus, building on two novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) campaigns conducted earlier this year to address cVDPV2 —critical measures for a major transit hub for mobile populations from neighbouring countries.

OPT (GAZA): NO DETECTIONS OF CVDPV2 FOLLOWING CAMPAIGNS

Eight months without any cVDPV2 detections in Gaza — even amid strengthened surveillance during the ceasefire — reflect the impact of three outbreak response campaigns in 2024 and early 2025.

Sustaining high-quality surveillance and urgently boosting immunity among children who have missed routine vaccines or have never been vaccinated, remains crucial, particularly given ongoing internal population movement.

Catch-up campaigns are underway to intensify routine immunization. A hybrid Outbreak Response Assessment (OBRA) is planned in early 2026.

SOMALIA: MAINTAINING A LASER FOCUS ON QUALITY

Somalia remains focused on enhancing the quality of vaccination campaigns and poliovirus surveillance, supported by an upcoming audit of immunization campaigns planned for early 2026. To mitigate the risk of cVDPV1 importation, Somaliland conducted a subnational bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) campaign in September, with a second round planned before the end of the year.

Additionally, the Outbreak Response and Preparedness Group (ORPG) has approved one round of an nOPV2 vaccination campaign for the south and central parts of Somalia during the last quarter of 2025.

Cross-border coordination with Kenya and Ethiopia remains a key priority to interrupt transmission.

SUDAN: RESPONDING TO THE OUTBREAK IN HIGH-RISK STATES

Despite protracted conflict, poor weather conditions and a worsening humanitarian crisis, Sudan implemented the first phase of a subnational polio campaign in two out of the five targeted states - Central and West Darfur - from late September to early October.

Working closely with humanitarian partners, vaccinators reached eligible children across both states. Independent monitoring indicates coverage exceeded 96%, reflecting the impact of improved access in Darfur. The second round of the nOPV2 campaign is planned as soon as conditions allow.

YEMEN: MITIGATING SPREAD IN THE SOUTH, STRENGTHENING ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION IN THE NORTH

In Yemen's northern governorates, laboratory results are still pending for over 400 stool samples collected from children with acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) since March 2025. Sample collection from sewage water resumed in May 2025 in the north after an eight-month pause. However, mass vaccination campaigns remain banned, despite continued poliovirus transmission. Negotiations are ongoing to allow the use of nOPV2 with sufficient coverage to stop the outbreak.

To mitigate the risk of poliovirus spread, the southern governorates carried out their second polio vaccination campaign of the year—reaching more than 1.4 million children—and ran a third round of integrated outreach in September. In the north, a similar integrated outreach effort in August provided health services and routine vaccinations, following years of restrictions on immunization.

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Joining forces to end polio in the Horn of Africa and Yemen

In October 2025, health ministers and partners from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen came together for the first virtual quarterly Interministerial Meeting on Variant Poliovirus for the Horn of Africa and Yemen. This united front demonstrated strong political will towards ending polio outbreaks in the subregion. Leaders reviewed hard-won progress, and committed to urgent, coordinated, and high-impact actions to confront persistent challenges and drive variant poliovirus to zero.
Read more: Health leaders unite to tackle polio across the Horn of Africa and Yemen - GPEI

To complement this political commitment, and strengthen cross-border coordination among Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen, WHO, UNICEF and other GPEI partners convene virtually once a month as part of the Incident Management Support Team (IMST) from WHO EMR and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa (MENA)/Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO); and WHO Africa Region (AFRO) Regional Outbreak Response Group (RORG). The team, which kicked off meetings in October, aims to address technical and operational challenges, steering solutions towards a more robust and synchronized outbreak response in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

Intensifying inter-regional coordination to stop transmission in Sudan

In efforts to support the outbreak response in Sudan, in November 2025, the IMST established a task team to meet regularly with the WHO and UNICEF teams serving the Lake Chad Basin countries.

During a first meeting in November, the task team explored ways to support poliovirus surveillance in Darfur, including by way of transporting sample shipments through Chad, synchronizing immunization campaigns between Sudan and Chad in the future, and considering ways to jointly improve poliovirus surveillance for and immunization of around 1 million Sudanese refugees who fled to and live in Chad.

Strengthening multi-level, multi-regional responses to polio outbreaks

The ORPG, IMST, and WHO Africa Region (AFRO) Regional Outbreak Response Group (RORG) convened a face-to-face meeting in Kenya in October. The team considered efficient ways to streamline responses to outbreaks, agreed on priorities in view of funding cuts, and introduced the process of updating the standard operating protocol for outbreaks among other priorities.

Send questions to:

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