

MENA EMR REGIONAL CVDPV OUTBREAKS

Issue #44 | Quarter 1 2026 (1 January-31 March 2026)

OVERVIEW

Djibouti: No circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus has been detected in children or wastewater since May 2025, following polio vaccination campaigns and scaled-up efforts to strengthen children’s immunity. Sustained immunization is critical given high cross-border risk as a regional transit hub.

The Gaza Strip: A Polio Outbreak Response Assessment (OBRA) mission conducted from January-February 2026 confirmed strong partner coordination and high vaccine uptake by caregivers, alongside the strong commitment of frontline workers resulting in high-quality campaigns and improved surveillance. The mission concluded that low-level transmission cannot be ruled out and that sustained efforts, including in surveillance, remain critical to outbreak closure.

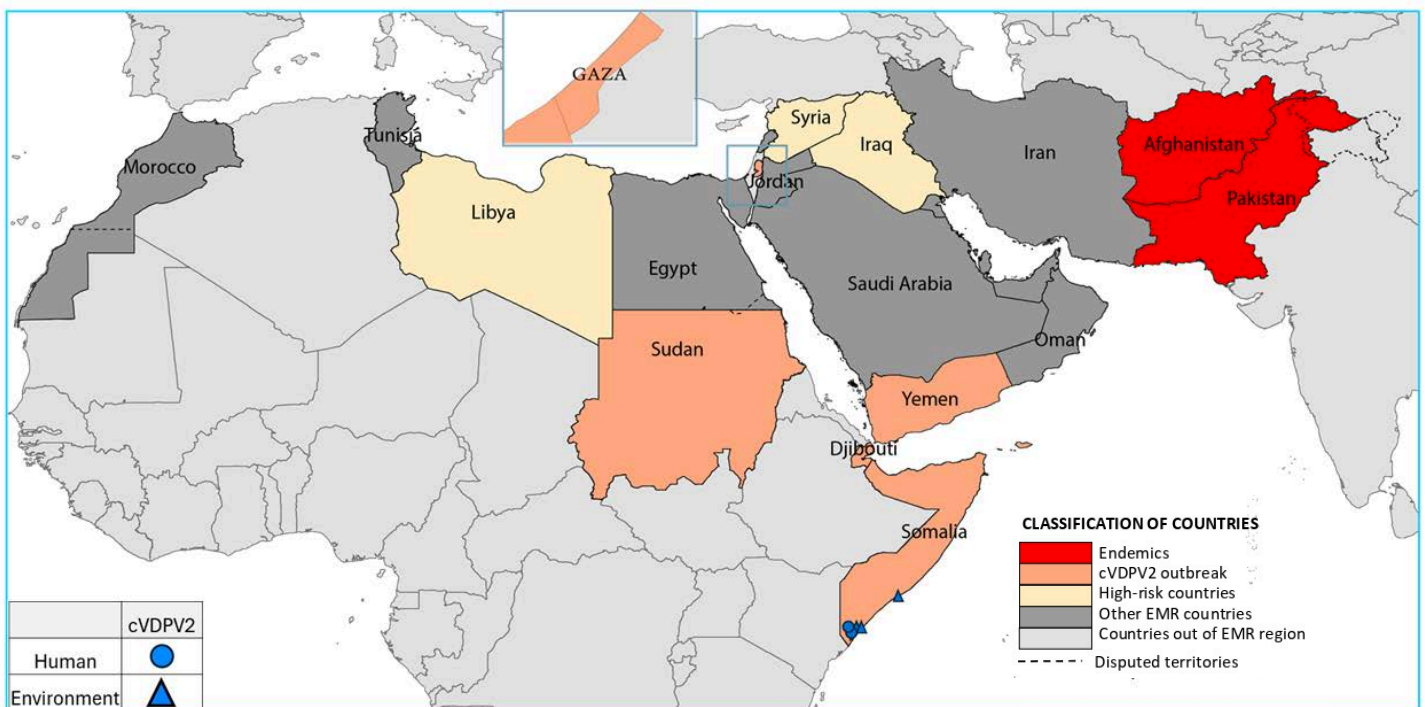
Somalia: cVDPV2 transmission continues, with detections both in children and the environment in 2026. Emergency planning, efficiency measures, and partner

coordination are aimed at improving the quality of outbreak response.

Sudan: Sample transportation from the Darfur states to Cameroon via Chad was initiated after conflict-related delays; testing is currently underway. Following delays in sample testing, cVDPV2 was confirmed in wastewater samples collected between June and December 2025 from East Darfur, Red Sea and West Darfur States. A vaccination campaign is planned in the second quarter.

Yemen: Yemen is still grappling with a cVDPV2 outbreak which began in 2021, as mass vaccination campaigns remain banned in the northern governorates. The inability to ship samples from the northern governorates to WHO-accredited polio laboratories since the end of March 2025 masks the true extent of the outbreak. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen routine immunization in the south, including four integrated outreach rounds planned for 2026.

Poliovirus in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2026



Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus detections in the EMR Region, 2026

Country	2026			
	Number of cases (detections in children)	Most recent date of detection	No of detections from the environment	Most recent date of detection
cVDPV2				
Djibouti		12-Jan-25		18-May-25
oPt		25-Jul-24		5-Mar-25
Somalia	3	20-Feb-26	4	15-Feb-26
Sudan		8-Oct-25	2	28-Feb-26
Yemen		5-Oct-25		30-Sep-25
cVDPV1				
Djibouti				18-May-25

Note: Samples from Sudan and Yemen are still awaiting testing



COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

DJIBOUTI: NO POLIOVIRUS DETECTIONS SINCE MAY 2025

Following two nOPV2 campaigns and efforts to strengthen immunization in 2025, Djibouti is assessing the epidemiological situation to inform potential additional outbreak response activities. Poliovirus was last detected in a child in January 2025 and in wastewater in May 2025, demonstrating the impact of the vaccination campaigns.

Sustained efforts to further strengthen children's immunity – including through additional vaccination planned for May 2026 - will be critical, given Djibouti is a regional transit hub surrounded by countries facing poliovirus outbreaks.

OUTBREAK RESPONSE ASSESSMENT IN THE GAZA STRIP

A Polio Outbreak Response Assessment (OBRA) conducted in the Gaza Strip from 29 January–5 February 2026 evaluated efforts to stop transmission of variant poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2). This transmission was first confirmed in a wastewater sample collected from Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis in July 2024 and in a child from central Gaza Strip a month later and continued until March 2025.

The mission reviewed coordination, surveillance, immunization systems, community engagement, and gender equity aspects of the outbreak response in the Gaza Strip through field, desk, and virtual analyses. The mission commended the Ministry of Health, partners and donors for effective multi-level coordination, which

enabled access to children, high-quality campaigns, and enhanced poliovirus surveillance. Strong vaccine uptake by communities and engagement of frontline workers contributed to the robust response despite the complex setting.

The mission concluded that low-level transmission cannot be ruled out, underscoring the need to sustain progress and address gaps, especially for mobile and underserved populations. Partners are continuing to support surveillance, immunization, and response readiness through an action plan introduced early in March 2026, with a follow-up assessment planned 12 months after the last detection in March 2025.

STEPPING UP THE QUALITY OF OUTBREAK RESPONSE IN SOMALIA

Somalia is facing persistent cVDPV2 transmission in the central and south states, with detection in three children and four positive wastewater samples reported in 2026.

Efforts are being made to develop a streamlined emergency action plan for 2026 and explore strategies to improve the quality of vaccination and surveillance, while addressing protracted challenges such as insecurity and

access issues in central and south Somalia.

Meanwhile, ongoing global funding constraints have led to the restructuring of the polio workforce in Somalia during the first quarter of the year. As a result, the country is working to increase efficiency while safeguarding critical eradication functions.

STRENGTHENING FORCES TO SUSTAIN SURVEILLANCE IN SUDAN

Sudan confirmed cVDPV2 in five ES samples collected from East Darfur, Red Sea and West Darfur states, following a lag in sample testing.

Following months of coordination by a multi-agency, multi-regional task team formed in November 2025, samples from the Darfur states are now being transported to Cameroon via Chad for testing. Sample transportation from these states had been stalled since June 2025 due to roadblocks related to the ongoing conflict. So far, 20 shipments of stool and wastewater samples have been

sent to the VACSERA Laboratory in Egypt for testing since the conflict began in March 2023, with the last one being dispatched in March 2026.

As part of the ongoing outbreak response, plans are underway to conduct a vaccination campaign in April 2026.

The last case in Sudan was reported in October 2025, although sample results are still pending.

YEMEN: PROGRESS CONTINUES IN THE SOUTHERN GOVERNORATES

Shipment of surveillance samples from children in the northern governorates with AFP has remained disrupted since the end of March 2025. Delays in transporting wastewater samples from the southern governorates have also affected the timeliness of outbreak monitoring.

Two rounds of vaccination campaigns are planned this year, contingent on acceptance of the nOPV2 response

plan in the northern governorates. If approved, vaccination campaigns will be also conducted in the southern governorates to build children's immunity across the entire country.

The authorities in the northern governorates are exploring options to secure routine vaccines through partners, including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Planning for interministerial meeting for the Horn of Africa and Yemen

Planning is underway to conduct the third interministerial meeting on variant poliovirus for the Horn of Africa and Yemen in May 2026, on the margins of the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly in Geneva. Health ministers from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and

Yemen will come together to take joint action to stop poliovirus transmission in this subregion. This meeting follows a virtual one conducted in October 2025 and an in-person one convened at the 2025 WHA.

Inter-regional coordination supports response in Sudan

A task team comprising members from WHO Chad and Sudan, and WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions, UNICEF Middle Eastern and North Africa Region and the International Organization of Migration (IOM),

meets on a biweekly basis to support the polio outbreak response in Sudan's Darfur states. It also works to ensure returnees and Sudanese refugees in Chad receive polio vaccines.

Demonstrating regional solidarity

United to End Polio, donors and Member States across the Eastern Mediterranean Region are demonstrating the power of regional solidarity to protect children with life-saving vaccines while strengthening health systems in the most challenging settings. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Mohammad bin Zayed Humanitarian Foundation and the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center for their continued commitment to polio eradication and health systems strengthening.

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