



Children under five will receive the vaccine free regardless of nationality Beirut, 14 October 2014 – The Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF and humanitarian partners launched a national polio immunization campaign at a press conference held at the Lebanese Order of Physicians.

The campaign is part of the crucial national response to the outbreak of polio in the country, and aims to reach over 550 000 children under-five in Lebanon, regardless of nationality, in order to keep Lebanon polio-free.

The event was headed by H.E. Mr Wael Abou Faour, Minister of Public Health, and was attended by the Ministers of Interior, Education and Information, as well as representatives of the Lebanese Order of Physicians, the National Certification Committee and the Expanded Programme on Immunisation Committee along with members of the press. Further attendees included Rotary International and other nongovernmental organization partners who have been supporting the initiative.

“We partner once again with WHO and UNICEF to ensure that Lebanon’s polio-free status is maintained and to protect our children from this dangerous and often deadly disease” said the Minister of Public Health.

“Together with our partners, we are sparing no efforts to ensure vaccination coverage of all children under the age of five in all areas, including the most remote areas, and we pledge to

continue our hard work and dedication to stop the reintroduction of the polio virus in Lebanon”.

The national immunization campaign will be in two rounds. The first round will take place between 15 and 21 October 2014 and will be followed by another round between 15 and 21 November 2014. All children under five years of age must participate in both rounds.

“We cannot allow a single case of polio in Lebanon. That would be an utterly preventable tragedy. This is why the outbreak in the region has brought us all together to mobilize everything possible to immunize all children under the age of five in Lebanon.” said acting WHO Representative in Lebanon, Dr Gabriele Riedner. “We will continue supporting the Ministry of Public Health and physicians in the public and private sector to ensure the campaign is a success and Lebanon remains free of polio.”

“There is a real concern that the reappearance of the virus in the Middle East and the high levels of population displacement might lead to the spread of the outbreak beyond Syria and Iraq.” said Ms Annamaria Laurini, UNICEF Representative in Lebanon. “This is why we continue to strive to reach every child and every parent through the help and the participation of physicians and health workers both in the private and public health sector, as well as through our NGO partners, with the clear aim to ensure that every single child under-five in Lebanon, regardless of background and nationality is protected”.

1.2 million doses of polio vaccine have been provided to the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that children under-five will receive the vaccine free regardless of nationality.

To expand the reach of the core message to a wider target audience, the campaign was endorsed by the popular singer Ms Nancy Ajram to encourage all parents to get their children vaccinated. The campaign will also be promoted through educational leaflets and various media outlets including links on all leading Lebanese online portals and news sites.

[Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

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