



29 March 2023, Tripoli, Libya - The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned about the rise in measles cases in Libya, especially in the municipalities of the south and west.

In epidemiological weeks 1 to 9, the National Center for Disease Control reported that 93 of 391 suspected measles cases had been confirmed, with no related deaths. The most affected areas were Althanawia, Almashroa', Hay Abdel kafy, Altaury, and Altadamon in the Sabha municipality and Tenenei in Bani Waleed municipality.

“The re-emergence of sporadic outbreaks is a worrying sign of a heightened risk for spreading vaccine-preventable diseases that could place children's health at significant risk,” says Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Libya. “The ongoing conflict, pandemic-related disruptions and increasing inequalities in access to vaccines globally and in the Region have led to the diversion of resources from routine immunization programmes in Libya, leaving children unprotected against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases.”

WHO urges the Libyan health authorities and the international community to provide more support to help address critical health needs in the country.

WHO acknowledges the efforts made by the National Centre for Disease Control and the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre to respond to the current measles outbreaks by organizing supplementary immunization campaigns, improving measles case management, enhancing infection prevention and control measures, and launching risk communication and community engagement activities in the outbreak areas while supporting routine immunization efforts.

To prevent and respond to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, WHO and UNICEF are supporting efforts to strengthen immunization systems to ensure every child receives the protection they need. This includes relaunching vaccination campaigns, identifying communities and people missed during the pandemic, and ensuring that COVID-19 vaccine delivery is integrated into overall immunization services.

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