

Afghanistan Polio Update



AT A GLANCE:

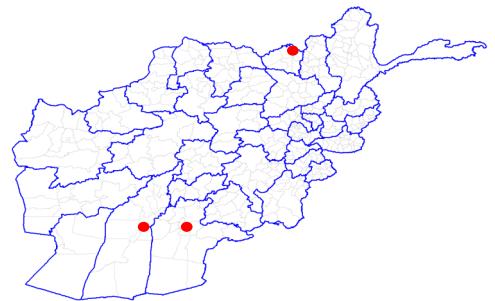
- 3 new wild poliovirus (WPV1) cases reported by RRL this quarter—13 cases in 2016, 3 in 2017
- 3 environmental samples positive for WPV have been reported in 2017
- 8.9 million children targeted during National Immunization Days (NIDs) campaign on 27-31 March 2017
- 5.6 million children targeted during Sub-National Immunization Days (SNIDs) in January and February
- IPV/OPV campaigns conducted in Kandahar, Paktia and Helmand provinces
- 75 environmental samples from 17 sites collected this quarter
- 338 permanent transit teams and 49 cross-border teams at 18 cross-border vaccination points vaccinating children on the move
- 6,076 children were vaccinated this quarter with OPV and 977 with IPV by teams at UNHCR and IOM sites receiving returnees and refugees from Pakistan and Iran

POLIO TRANSMISSION:

Three wild poliovirus (WPV1) cases were reported by the Regional Reference Laboratory (RRL) in the first quarter of 2017. One case was reported from Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand, one from Kandahar and the latest one from Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz province. This brings the total number of WPV1 cases in Afghanistan to 13 in 2016 and three in 2017. No VDPV2 cases were reported this quarter.

Three environmental samples positive for WPV have been reported in 2017. Two positive samples were reported in January 2017, one each from Helmand and Nangarhar provinces. The latest WPV1 positive was reported in March 2017, collected in Kandahar province in January 2017.

Polio Cases in 2017



Transmission in Kunduz

- ◆ One case from Dasht-e-Archi district with date of onset 21 February 2017
- ◆ The area has been inaccessible since January 2016

Response:

- ◆ Permanent transit teams in place
- ◆ Access gained for house-to-house vaccination
- ◆ Three vaccination campaigns; first two with expanded age group (<10 years) and third with IPV+OPV; scope of response covers five provinces (>1.7 million children)



Reducing Geographic Spread of Wild Poliovirus:

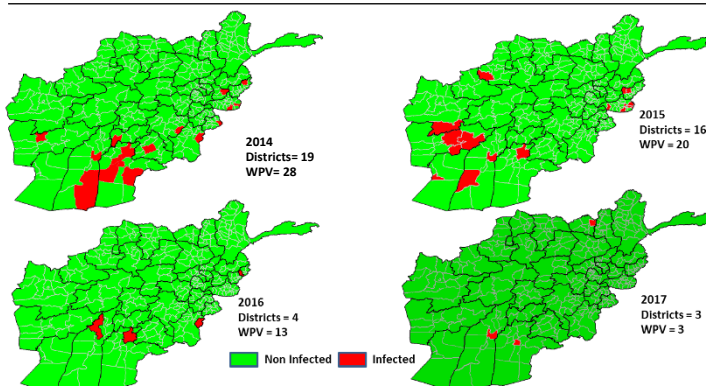
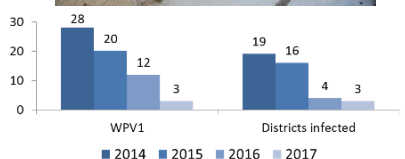


Photo: WHO/J.Jalali



IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs)

- ◆ Sub-national Immunization Days (SNIDs) were implemented on 30 January—3 February, targeting 5.6 million children under the age of 5 with OPV in 24 provinces
- ◆ Over 5.6 million children under the age of 5 were targeted with OPV during Sub-national Immunization Days (SNIDs) in 24 provinces on 27 February—3 March 2017
- ◆ 8.9 million children under the age of 5 were targeted with OPV during National Immunization Days (NIDs) in 31 provinces on 27-31 March
- ◆ Case response campaigns were conducted in Kandahar, Helmand and Nangarhar in response to WPV cases and positive environmental samples (see table below for details)

IPV-OPV Campaigns

- ◆ IPV-OPV campaigns were conducted in Kandahar, Paktia and Helmand provinces, reaching a total of 132,325 children (see table for details).

Complementary Vaccination Activities

- ◆ A total of 49 cross-border teams at 18 cross-border vaccination points, 338 permanent transit teams (PTTs) and 42 permanent polio teams (PPTs) were operational across Afghanistan during this quarter
- ◆ Permanent transit teams vaccinated 2,957,848 children under the age of 5 against polio during the quarter while cross-border teams vaccinated 137,849 children under the age of 10
- ◆ During the quarter, 6,076 children were vaccinated with OPV and 977 with IPV by teams at UNHCR and IOM sites receiving returnees from Pakistan and Iran. In 2016, a total of 122,789 returnee children were vaccinated with OPV and 32,405 with IPV at these sites
- ◆ Vaccination teams are prepared to scale up vaccination activities when the registration of returnee refugees by IOM and UNHCR increases in April 2017
- ◆ In compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR), 49,504 international travelers were vaccinated against polio this quarter

Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs)

Campaign	Children Targeted	PCA Coverage	% Failed Lots in LQAS
30 January—3 February SNIDs	5.6 million	95.08%	8.1%
27 Feb-2 March SNIDs	5.6 million	95%	7.9%
27—31 March NIDs	8.9 million	95.8%	12.1%

IPV-OPV Campaigns

Date	Location	Children Vaccinated	PCM Coverage
2-8 January 2017	Ghorak, Khakrez, Reg, Shorabak and high-risk areas of Kandahar City	22,287	87.5
11-17 February 2017	Janikhel, Paktia	10,372	99.4
28 February - 6 March 2017	Helmand	99,666	97.1

Case Response		
District	Transmission	Response
Kandahar	AFP (onset 13 January 2017)	4 SIAs (30 Jan, 13 Feb, 27 Feb, 27 March)
Nahr-e-Saraj	Environmental Sample (ES) collected on 23 December 2016	4 SIAs including one expanded age with IPV
	AFP (onset on 21 January 2017)	
Jalalabad	ES collected on 26 December 2016	4 SIAs (19 Jan, 30 Jan, 27 Feb, 27 Mar), focus on returnees
	ES collected on 24 January 2017	3 SIAs (30 Jan, 27 Feb, 27 Mar), focus on returnees



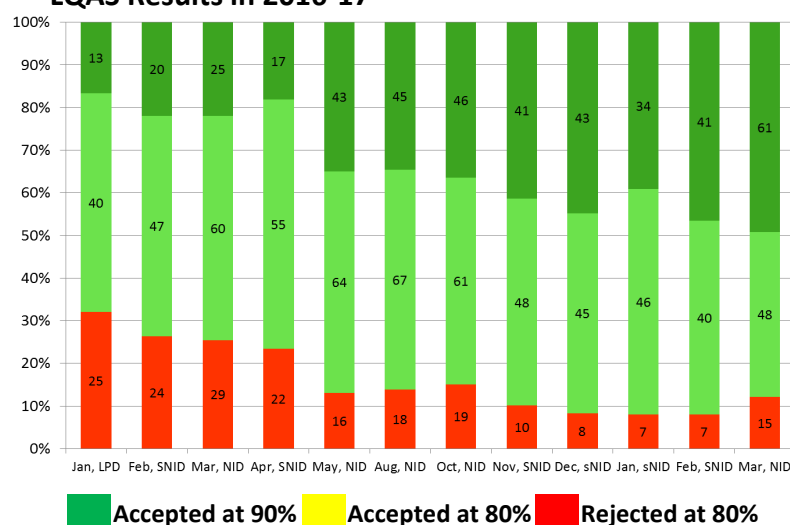
Photos: WHO/S.Ramo



Vaccination of returnees and refugees at the Torkham border in eastern Afghanistan

QUALITY OF SUPPLEMENTARY IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

LQAS Results in 2016-17



Lot Quality Assessment Sampling (LQAS) data shows improvement in the quality of supplementary immunization activities over the past year. The proportion of failed lots decreased from 25% in March 2016 to 12% in March 2017.



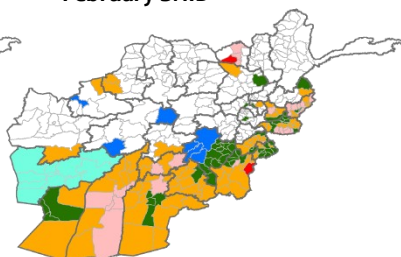
Photo: UNICEF/Afghanistan

ACCESS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

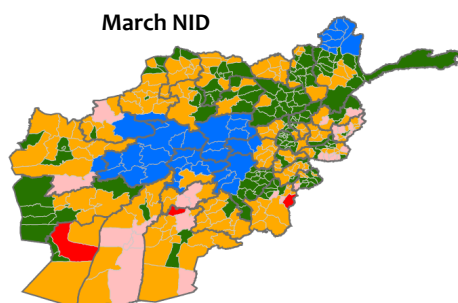
January SNID



February SNID

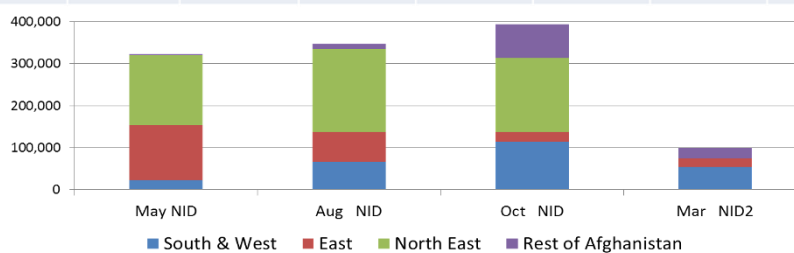


March NID



Inaccessible Children: May 2016 - March 2017

Region	May NID	Aug SNID	Aug NID	Oct NID	Nov SNID	Dec SNID	Jan SNID	Feb SNID	Mar NID
East	131,781	73,355	71,085	23,204	24,213	17,488	19,156	18,932	21,002
North	3376	0	0	6,206	0	0	0	0	0
NE	165,333	101,434	197,192	176,377	105,539	105,024	104,200	104,280	0
South	22,811	49,403	28,798	141,142	120,597	18,192	78,254	12,416	40,989
SE	400	1,215	12,101	46,808	13,827	12,651	1,500	20,455	24,051
West	0	132,806	38,260	0	0	749	183,100	0	12,970
Central	0	0	70	0	75	75	0	0	0
Total	323,701	358,213	347,507	390,373	264,251	154,178	386,207	156,083	99,012



Data as of 31 March 2017

SURVEILLANCE

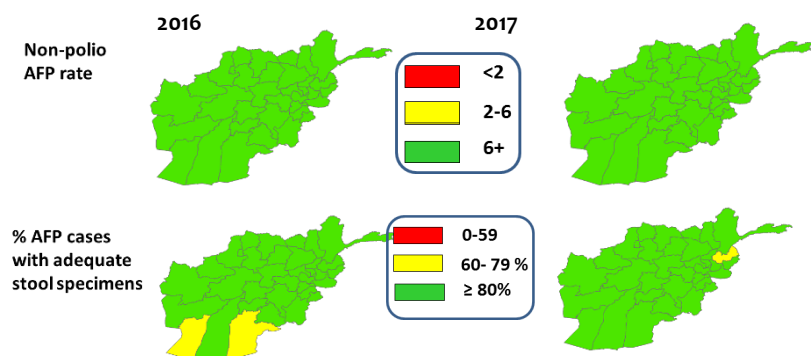
Environmental Surveillance:

- 75 environmental samples from 17 sites located in six provinces in the Southern, Eastern and Central regions have been collected and sent to the laboratory in good condition during this quarter
- Of the total 75 samples collected, laboratory results have been received for 52 samples — three WP1 positive environmental samples were reported this quarter (one sample was collected in December 2016 and two in January 2017)
- A survey for expanding environmental surveillance was carried out in Herat and Kunduz provinces — one new potential site was identified in each province

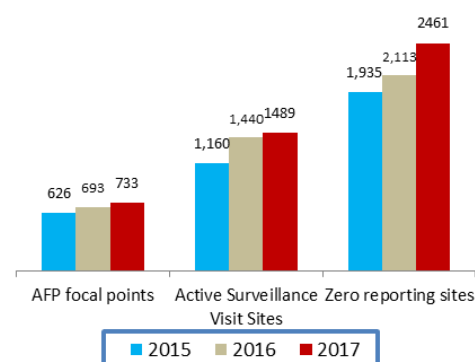
AFP Surveillance:

- For 2017, non-polio AFP rate is 12, adequate stool rate is 94%, and non-polio enterovirus rate is 14% at the national level. In all regions non-polio AFP rate is 5 or above, adequate stool rate above 89% and non-polio enterovirus rate ranges from 0 to 23%. Out of 34 provinces, only Nuristan and Zabul have an adequate stool rate of less than 80% (75% and 77%, respectively).
- In 2017, 645 AFP cases have been reported, of which 483 have been discarded as “non-polio AFP” and 159 AFP cases are pending classification. From 2016, 13 AFP cases are pending classification.
- Extensive AFP reporting network in Afghanistan consists of 2461 reporting sites and 28,543 reporting volunteers

AFP Surveillance: Quality Key Indicators



Expansion of Surveillance Network:



Technical Advisory Group commends Afghanistan's determined efforts to end polio

Photo: WHO/ S.Ramo



The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on polio eradication convened in Kabul on 4-5 April to review Afghanistan's progress in polio eradication and provide recommendations for further interventions and areas of focus to stop the circulation of wild poliovirus. The TAG commended the tremendous progress made in polio eradication in Afghanistan and noted several improvements achieved by the polio programme since the Group last met nine months ago.

[Read more](#)

Afghanistan steps up surveillance to accelerate polio eradication

A strong surveillance system is the backbone of Afghanistan's polio eradication efforts. It ensures that every single poliovirus is detected and analysed, enabling a quick and effective response to stop every strain of the debilitating virus. Polio partners are further strengthening Afghanistan's surveillance system to accelerate progress towards a polio-free Afghanistan. In last year alone, 458 new surveillance reporting sites have been introduced and the AFP reporting volunteer network expanded by 18%. Environmental samples are currently regularly collected from 17 sites in six provinces. [Read more](#)

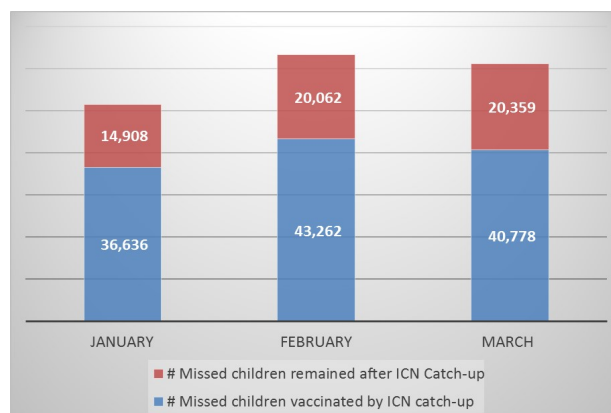


Photo: WHO/ J.Jalali

Community Engagement

Immunization Communication Network (ICN)

During the quarter, a cumulative total of 117,754 out of 173,357 children who were missed during the January, February, and March campaigns were vaccinated by social mobilizers in between campaigns in very high-risk districts (VHRDs) where the ICN conducted post-campaign follow up of missed children, representing a recovery of 68% of absent (77%) and refusal (36%) children after campaign. Specialized issue-based influencer teams have been deployed in Kandahar and Jalalabad to address remaining chronic refusals.



Campaign rounds	Total Registered Missed	Total Vaccinated by ICN	% Vaccinated by ICN
January 2017	51,544	36,636	71%
February 2017	63,324	43,262	68%
March 2017	61,137	40,778	67%

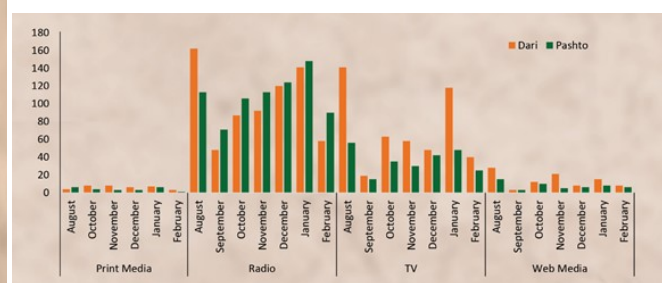
A total of 22 provincial communication officers, 124 district communication officers, 744 cluster communication supervisors, and 5477 social mobilizers were operational across 46 districts (40 VHRDs) in high-risk provinces supporting household engagement, tracking missed children, and supporting outreach for broader health activities such as routine immunization, sanitation and hygiene promotion, nutrition, and maternal health. 28% of social mobilizers were female.

In March 2017, the ICN contributed to microplan revision and conducted a survey to track high-risk populations, including returnees from Pakistan, internally displaced people, and other groups on the move in their areas of focus.

Increasing reach through media



Frequency of earned media reporting on polio



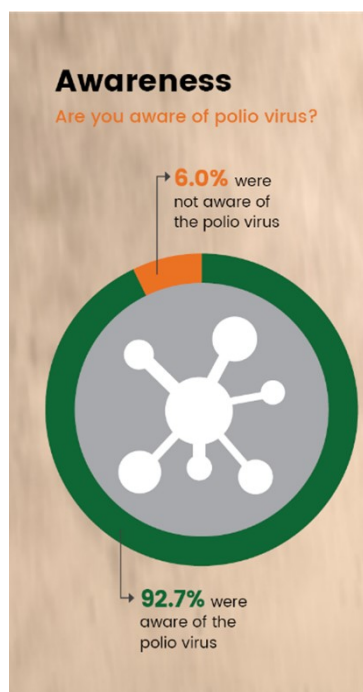
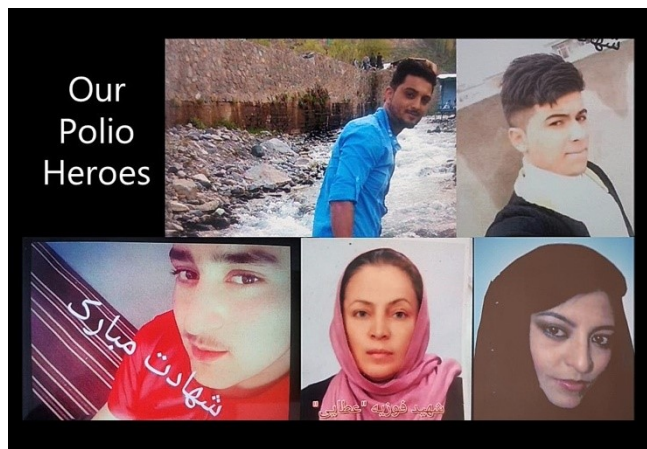
Earned media coverage on Afghan radio and TV has risen sharply since 2014.

According to media monitoring, between 5-10 news stories air daily.

In memory of our polio heroes

On 1 March 2017, anti-government elements launched two deadly attacks in Kabul City, killing at least 16 Afghans and injuring dozens. Among those killed were five polio vaccinators who were going from house to house to vaccinate children in their neighbourhood.

We will be forever grateful for the sacrifices of Abdul Qadeer (22), Ahmad Jalal (18), Ahmad Khaled (17), Fawzia (35), and Muzhda (23), who dedicated their lives to improving the health of Afghan children. The polio programme extends its deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of these polio heroes.



New survey sheds light on attitudes and knowledge about polio

A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey conducted with over 4,000 respondents living in Afghanistan's 47 high-risk districts sheds new light on views on polio. The study was carried out in late 2016, with the findings shared in February 2017. Strikingly, about 93% of respondents are aware of polio. At the same time only about 56% of respondents were very concerned or somewhat concerned about their children getting the poliovirus. Of all respondents, 45% thought that polio was curable, while 42% thought it was incurable and 13% reported not knowing. The findings are an important guide for communications advocacy planning in 2017. Another KAP study, carried out by Harvard University, is nearing completion.

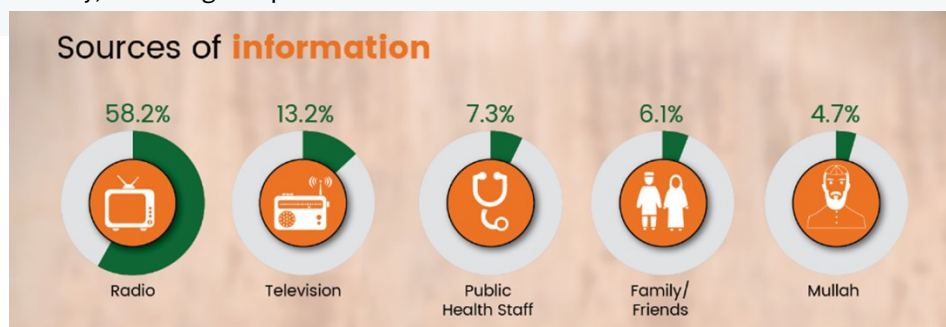


Photo: WHO/R.Akbar



International Women's Day 2017:

Meet the Afghan Women Leading the Battle against Polio

Thousands of remarkable female vaccinators, supervisors, campaign coordinators, surveillance volunteers and social mobilizers play a critical role in Afghanistan's efforts to eradicate polio. The progress the polio programme has witnessed in the past years would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of courageous women who are dedicated to protecting children and making polio history. Through [this series of photographs](#), meet some of the brave and hard-working Afghan women who are leading the battle against this paralysing disease, bringing Afghanistan, and the world, closer to eradicating polio forever.

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