

Current major event

Polio situation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, May 2021

Polio remains endemic in two countries of the Region: Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition to the wild poliovirus, outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) have been reported in some countries of the Region. Affected countries continue to respond to this threat with the support of WHO and UNICEF by strengthening polio surveillance systems, ensuring early case detection and timely outbreak response, and providing high vaccination coverage.

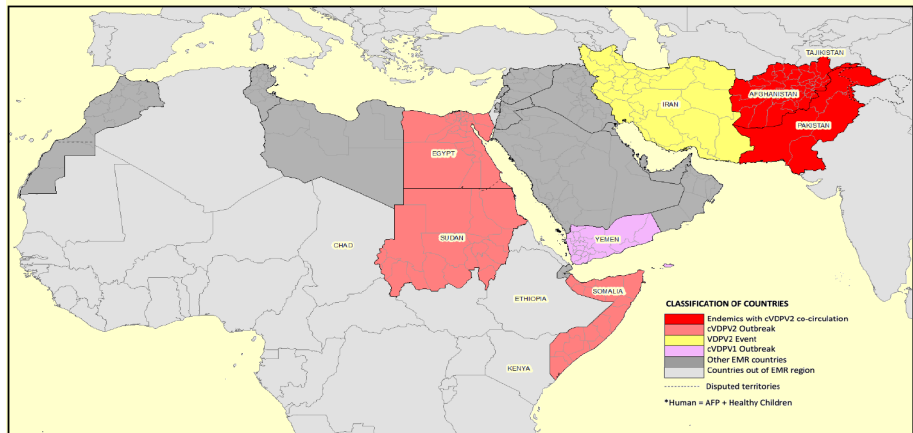
Editorial note

This Region is considered at high risk of cVDPV2 through its international spread or regional emergence. This assessment is based on the persistence of known polioviruses within its populations and environment for over a year and low population immunity in some pockets as a result of protracted emergencies or inaccessibility to immunization services. Sporadic cases and outbreaks were reported from the Region in last few months in the following countries:

- **Afghanistan** reported the co-circulation of WPV1 and cVDPV2. As of 15 June 2021, one case of WPV1 and 41 cases of cVDPV2 were reported.
- **Egypt** reported nine positive environmental samples, with the most recent detection in Alexandria on 25 February 2021.
- **Islamic Republic of Iran** reported its most recent cVDPV2 positive environmental sample on 20 February 2021.
- **Pakistan** reported one case of WPV1 and 8 cases of cVDPV2.
- **Sudan** reported no new cases of cVDPV2 to date in 2021. A total of 58 cases were reported in 2020, with the most recent case having onset of paralysis on 18 December 2020. The initial viruses were linked to the ongoing outbreak in Chad followed by local transmission.
- **Somalia** declared the end of its cVDPV3 outbreak after 28 months of the last detected polio strain. However, it is still affected by cVDPV2. There were 14 cVDPV2 cases reported in 2020 and 3 cases were reported in 2019 (see table).
- **Yemen** reported one new case of cVDPV1 in 2021, bringing the total to 34 since the outbreak began in June 2019.

WHO and UNICEF are working together with countries to respond to these polio outbreaks. Acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance has been strengthened in many countries of the Region. In Sudan, internal review of AFP surveillance was conducted. Environmental surveillance has been established in Yemen, expanded in Sudan and maintained and enhanced in Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran and Somalia. In April 2021, a vaccination campaign using inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and yellow fever vaccine was conducted in Red Sea, Kassala

WPV, cVDPV1 and cVDPV2 circulation across the Region in 2021



Polio case count in the EMR, 2020-2021

	Country	2020	2021
WPV case	Afghanistan	56	1
	Pakistan	84	1
cVDPV1 case	Yemen	29	0
cVDPV2 case	Afghanistan	308	41
	Pakistan	135	8
	Sudan	58	0
	Somalia	14	0
cVDPV2 strain detected sewage systems with local circulation	Egypt	1	9
cVDPV2 strain detected sewage systems without local circulation	Iran	2	1

and Gedarif states of Sudan. In Yemen, a second polio outbreak response campaign started on 29 May 2021 targeting around 4 million children under the age of five in all 14 northern governorates. In Egypt, a total of 16.6 million children under the age of five were reached with the monovalent oral polio vaccine type 2 (mOPV2) through a vaccination campaign. In Islamic Republic of Iran, two campaigns were conducted in February and March 2021 with 97% coverage in both rounds.

A new Ministerial Regional Subcommittee on Polio Eradication and Outbreaks was established to ensure a more coordinated support for the remaining wild poliovirus-endemic and polio outbreak-affected countries in the Region. The roll-out of the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) was emphasized to address outbreaks of cVDPVs more effectively and sustainably. The nOPV2 is designed to provide children with the same protection as the current oral vaccine while having less risk of mutating and causing paralysis. nOPV2 would also prevent cVDPVs in communities with low immunity.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2021

Afghanistan	[71 838 (2944), 4.1%]
Bahrain	[235 699 (939), 0.4%]
Djibouti	[11 527 (154), 1.3%]
Egypt	[260 659 (15 001), 5.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[2 893 218 (79741), 2.8%]
Iraq	[1 193 608 (16 334), 1.4%]
Jordan	[735 139 (9443), 1.3%]
Kuwait	[306 717 (1764), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[540 132 (7718), 1.4%]
Libya	[185 181 (3125), 1.7%]
Morocco	[518 868 (9138), 1.8%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[336 679 (3760), 1.1%]
Oman	[215 366 (2321), 1.1%]
Pakistan	[918 936 (20 736), 2.3%]
Qatar	[217 041 (554), 0.3%]
Saudi Arabia	[448 284 (7334), 1.6%]
Somalia	[14 653 (768), 5.2%]
Sudan	[35 495 (2630), 7.4%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[24 440 (1763), 7.2%]
Tunisia	[344 688 (12623), 3.7%]
United Arab Emirates	[567 263 (1673), 0.3%]
Yemen	[6731 (1319), 19.6%]