



Dear polio eradication supporter,

As the year comes to a close, the polio programme is taking a moment to reflect on lessons learned in 2019. The eradication effort faced significant challenges this year, including increasing vaccine-derived polio outbreaks and rising wild polio cases in the virus' last hiding places. In response, the GPEI, country governments and key stakeholders are working rapidly to develop and implement innovative strategies and tools to overcome the virus in 2020. Amidst challenges, we were encouraged by several key milestones – from [Nigeria marking three years wild polio-free](#) to the [eradication of wild polio type 3](#) and generous commitments at our [successful pledging event](#) – showing the world that our ultimate goal can be achieved.

Meet ten vaccine heroes who inspired us in the 2010s

Thousands of incredible individuals worldwide have dedicated themselves to ending polio. At the end of the decade, we revisit the stories of some of the exceptional people who let nothing stop them to defeat the virus. [\[More\]](#)



Dr Aluma speaks to mothers living in the Lake Chad region. ©UNF/Christine McNab

Polio surveillance at your fingertips

Polio workers across Africa use cell phones to monitor and track the poliovirus in even the hardest-to-reach areas. With a SMS-based reporting app called AVADAR, health workers and volunteers in ten African countries travel through their communities determining whether polio is the culprit behind cases of acute flaccid paralysis. Learn more about how text messages have helped the polio programme ensure that Africa is wild polio-free. [\[More\]](#)



A WHO team trains community volunteers and health workers on the user of AVADAR in Guraj, South Sudan. ©WHO/AFRO

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2019 (2018)*

Global Total: 125 (33)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2019 (2018)*

Global Total: 241 (104)

*Data as of 17 December 2019. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2018.

Breakdown by country
[Polio this week](#)

POLIO IN THE NEWS

[Forbes](#): The Iron Lung Was Just an Engineer's Side Project

[EndPolio](#): Keeping Polio at Zero in Nigeria

[WHO Regional Office for Africa](#): Africa Regional Certification Commission begins verification visit to Nigeria

Gender equality = better disease tracking

As the first WHO disease programme to develop a dedicated gender strategy, the GPEI continually works to improve gender equality at all levels – including on polio surveillance teams. Learn how evaluating the gender breakdown of Nigeria's polio programme is helping strengthen the country's surveillance network, ensuring no cases of polio go undetected.



Dr Alhassan explains the key signs of acute flaccid paralysis to a pharmacist in Borno State. ©WHO/Nigeria

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[\[More\]](#)

Picture of the Month



WHO medical officer Dr Aisha Alhassan conducts an acute flaccid paralysis examination in Jere Local Government Area, Borno State. ©WHO/Nigeria

FUNDING UPDATE

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative would like to express its gratitude to **all donors** for their continued support of the eradication effort, particularly those who made commitments at the polio pledging moment at the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi. Your support is vital to ensuring over 450 million children are vaccinated against polio every year.

Thank you to **Ambassador Ken Okaniwa of Japan** for his invaluable work over recent years leading the Polio Partners Group and a big welcome to the incoming Chair, **Ambassador Sally Mansfield of Australia**.

- Thank you to the people of **Liechtenstein** for their generous commitment of Sw.fr. 25 000 to polio eradication efforts, an extraordinary contribution in per capita terms. This contribution represents a full monetization of Liechtenstein's pledge made at the November 2019 polio pledging moment.
- Many thanks to **Germany**, who have donated €6 million to eradication efforts in Afghanistan, as part of a total €98.3 million announced at the polio pledging moment.
- Thank you to **Spain** for their generous contribution of €50 000 to eradication efforts.
- Many thanks to the **National Philanthropic Trust** which donated US\$ 7 888 000 for outbreak emergencies in the first half of 2020.
- Thank you to the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, which donated US\$ 11 million to implement timely outbreak vaccination activities in response to the circulation of vaccine-derived viruses, and US\$ 10 million to be made available for bridging loans for emerging needs and to support the Polio Endgame Strategy 2019-2023.
- UNICEF would like to thank the **UN Foundation** for its generous contribution of US\$ 149 760 which will be used to purchase lifesaving vaccines for children in Pakistan.
- UNICEF is grateful to the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** for their generous contribution of US\$ 19 999 402 to cover critical staffing in 2020, as well as their contribution of US\$ 1 819 800 for new field offices in Helmand and Uruzgan in Afghanistan and US\$ 4 000 000 for outbreak response.
- UNICEF would like to thank the **Gates Philanthropy Partners** for their generous contribution of US\$ 600 000 for outbreak response activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.