

Afghanistan Polio Update



AT A GLANCE:

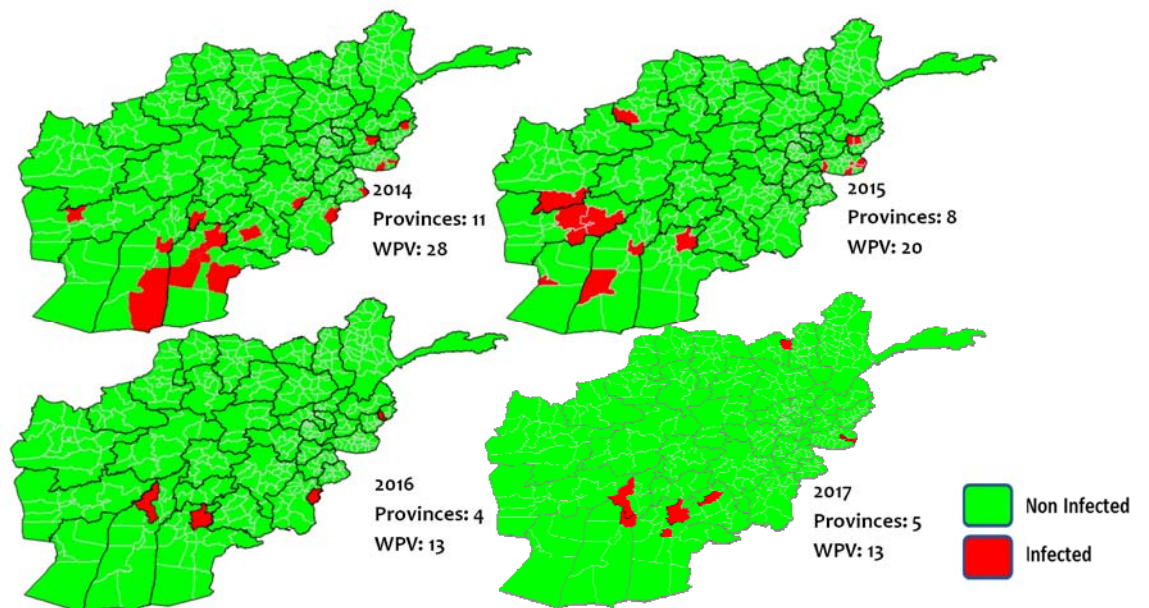
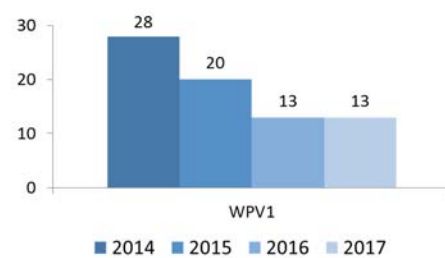
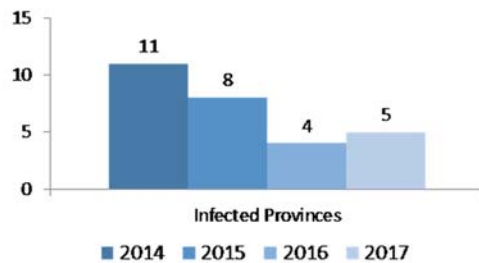
- 13 new wild poliovirus (WPV1) cases reported by the Regional Reference Laboratory in 2017—13 cases in 2016.
- 5,6 million children targeted during Sub-National Immunization Days (NIDs) on 6-10 October and 18-22 December.
- IPV/OPV campaigns conducted in 24 provinces
- Fourteen positive environmental samples from 20 sites were collected in October, November and December 2017. Eight from Kandahar, three from Nangarhar, two from Helmand province and one from Kabul.
- Altogether 30 environmental samples were reported positive for WPV in 2017.
- 391 permanent transit teams and 40 cross-border teams at 16 cross-border vaccination points vaccinating children on the move.
- Over 5,000 children were vaccinated with OPV by teams at UNHCR and IOM sites receiving returnees from Pakistan and Iran.

POLIO TRANSMISSION:

Seven wild poliovirus (WPV1) cases were reported by the Regional Reference Laboratory (RRL) between October and December 2017. This brings the total number of WPV1 cases in Afghanistan to 13 in 2017 and 13 in 2016. No VDPV2 cases were reported this quarter.

Fourteen positive environmental samples were reported in October, November and December 2017; 8 from Kandahar, 3 from Nangarhar, 2 from Helmand province and 1 from Kabul city. This brings the total positive environmental samples to 30 in Afghanistan during 2017.

Polio Cases in 2017



IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs)

- ◆ Sub-National Immunization Days (SNIDs), targeting over 5,6 million children under the age of 5 with OPV. on 6-10 October and 18-22 December in 24 provinces.
- ◆ Case response targeted over 60,000 under the age of 5 with OPV in 8 districts of the south and southeast regions. This included a campaign responding to the wild poliovirus case found in Shahwalikot in December.
- ◆ Case response targeted over 446,000 in Kabul province.

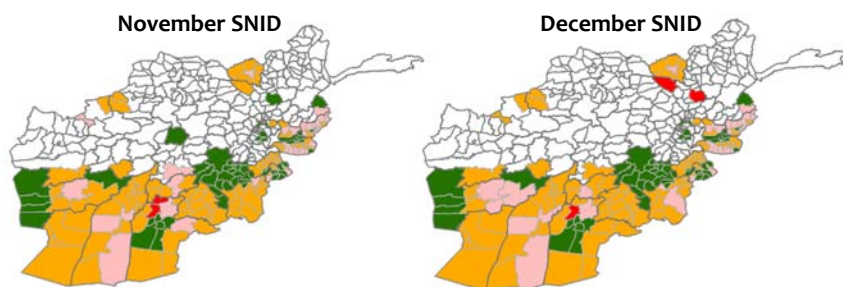
Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs)			
Campaign	Children Targeted	PCA Coverage	% Failed Lots in LQAS
Oct Case Response	61,171	98%	0%
Nov SNID	5.9 Million	94.9%	7%
Nov Case Response	446,025	99%	0%
Dec SNID	5.6 Million	95.1%	10%



5-year old Waris received a balloon after being vaccinated in Kandahar in December
Photo: WHO / Tuuli Hongisto

Access status for supplementary immunization activities

The overall access situation improved in the third quarter of 2017. The programme however continued to face challenges of access in some districts of Nangarhar and Kunar. The inaccessible areas in Kandahar, which were the epicenter of ongoing outbreak became accessible for first the time in November and the programme managed to conduct two SIAs there.

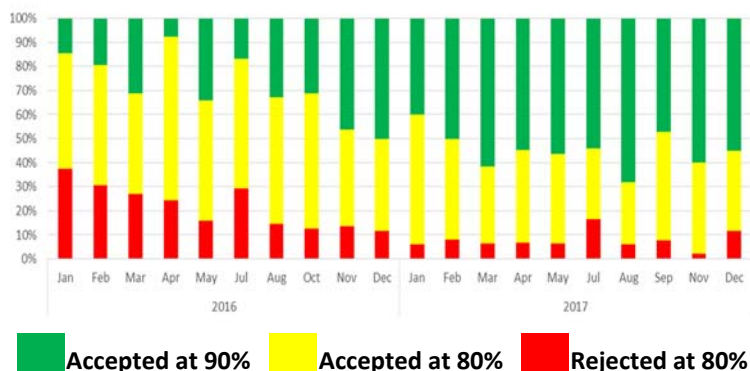


Inaccessible Children: December 2016 - December 2017

Region	Dec SNID	Jan SNID	Feb SNID	Mar NID	Apr SNID	May NID	November SNID	December SNID
East	17,488	19,156	18,932	21,002	34,528	26,734	31,470	20,463
North	0	0					0	
North-eastern	105,024	104,200	104,280			4,350	300	87,367
South	18,192	78,254	12,4161	40,989	42,793	35,705	13,249	17,641
South-Eastern	12,651	1,500	20,455	24,051	23,075	14,040	2,229	9,734
West	749	183,100		12,970	70	70	695	195
Central	75	0					0	
Total	154,178	386,207	156,083	99,012	100,466	80,899	47,943	135,400

QUALITY OF SUPPLEMENTARY IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

LQAS Results in 2016-17—National Level



Lot Quality Assurance 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 9% in December 2017 in the country. The percentage of accepted lots in very high risk districts increased from 63% in January 2016 to 88% in December 2017.

Case Response Activities			
Province	District	Transmission	Response
Nangarhar	5 districts	Confirmed polio case in Batikot (date of onset: 11 Oct 2017)	Case response 21-25 Oct SNID 67-10 Nov SNID 18-22 Dec
Kandahar	3 districts	Environmental sample in Shawalikot (date of collection: 17 Nov 2017)	Case response 22-26 Nov SNID 18-22 Dec
Kabul	3 districts	Environmental sample in Oct (date of collection: Oct 2017)	Case response 7-11 Dec SNID 18-22 Dec

IPV-OPV Campaigns

- 94,796 children were vaccinated with IPV in 3 districts of 2 provinces (Helmand and Kandahar) in the Southern region.

Complementary Vaccination Activities

- A total of 41 cross-border teams at 16 cross-border vaccination points and 391 permanent transit teams (PTTs) were operational across Afghanistan during this quarter. There were no permanent polio teams (PPTs).
- Permanent transit teams vaccinated 3,416,900 children under the age of 5 against polio during the quarter while cross-border teams vaccinated 275,00 children under the age of 10.
- During the reporting period, over 5,000 children were vaccinated with OPV 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.
- In compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR), 44,900 international travelers were vaccinated against polio between October-December 2017.

IPV-OPV Campaigns			
Date	Location	Children Vaccinated	PCM Coverage
9 Oct 2017	Spinboldak	44,899	77.3%
22 Oct 2017	Garmsher	44,033	93.1%
22 Oct 2017	Deh-e-Shu	6,199	91.2%



Over 450,000 children were vaccinated in Kabul and surrounding districts in December. Photo: WHO/Tuuli Hongisto

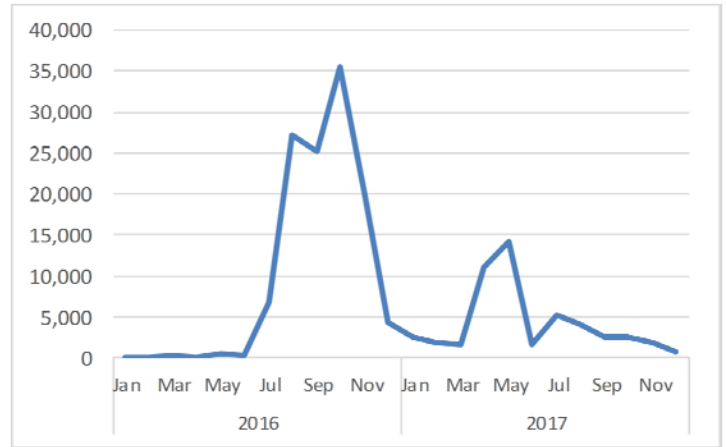
Vaccination of returnees and refugees continues at border areas

The Ministry of Public Health, WHO and UNICEF continue to vaccinate children crossing the border to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran to ensure all children are immunized and protected from polio. In 2017, over 50,000 children were given the oral polio vaccine (OPV) and over 25,600 have been vaccinated with the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). There are currently 40 cross-border teams vaccinating children at 16 vaccination points. In 2016 alone, over 122,000 returnee refugee children were vaccinated with OPV and over 32,000 with IPV at IOM/ UNHCR sites.



Photo: WHO/ S.Raimo

OPV Coverage at UNHCR Repatriation Centres and IOM Zero Point 2016-17



SURVEILLANCE

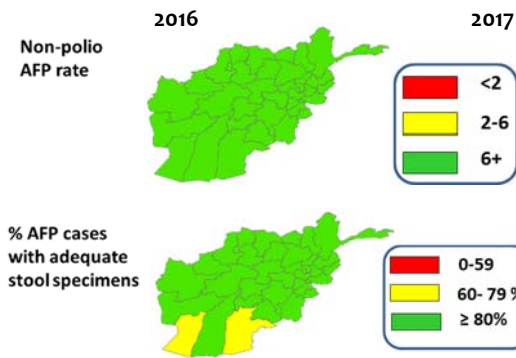
Environmental Surveillance:

- ◆ 84 environmental samples from 20 sites located in 9 provinces in the 07 regions were collected and sent to the laboratory during this quarter. Of the total 84 samples collected, laboratory results have been received for 32 samples — 14 WPV1 positive environmental samples were reported in this quarter.

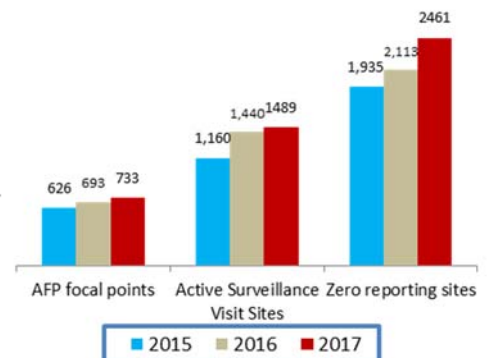
AFP Surveillance:

- ◆ In 2017, Afghanistan continued to meet the global surveillance indicators. The non-polio AFP rate is 15, adequate stool rate is 94%, and non-polio enterovirus rate 23% at the national level. In all regions, the non-polio AFP rate is 11 or above, adequate stool rate above 89% and non-polio enterovirus rate ranges from 20 to 26%.
- ◆ In 2017, 3,009 AFP were reported (1,683 males/1,326 females), of which 2,790 were discarded as “non-polio AFP” and 206 AFP cases are pending classification.
- ◆ An internal AFP Review conducted in October 2017 concluded that overall AFP surveillance looks good in areas reviewed. There is a sensitive AFP surveillance system in place including good community network of reporting volunteers. Overall documentation quality is satisfactory with certain minor deficiencies.

AFP Surveillance: Quality Key Indicators



Expansion of the Surveillance Network:



Community Engagement

Immunization Communication Network (ICN)

Social Mobilization and campaign awareness:

In December 2017, 6,548 Social Mobilizers (SM) and 929 Cluster Communication Supervisors (CCS) were engaged in community mobilization and vaccination of missed children in between campaigns. In ICN covered areas the awareness was always above 80% while in non-ICN covered areas it had been ranging between 40-45%. SMs were the most frequent source of information in ICN covered areas much above radio, TV or other sources.

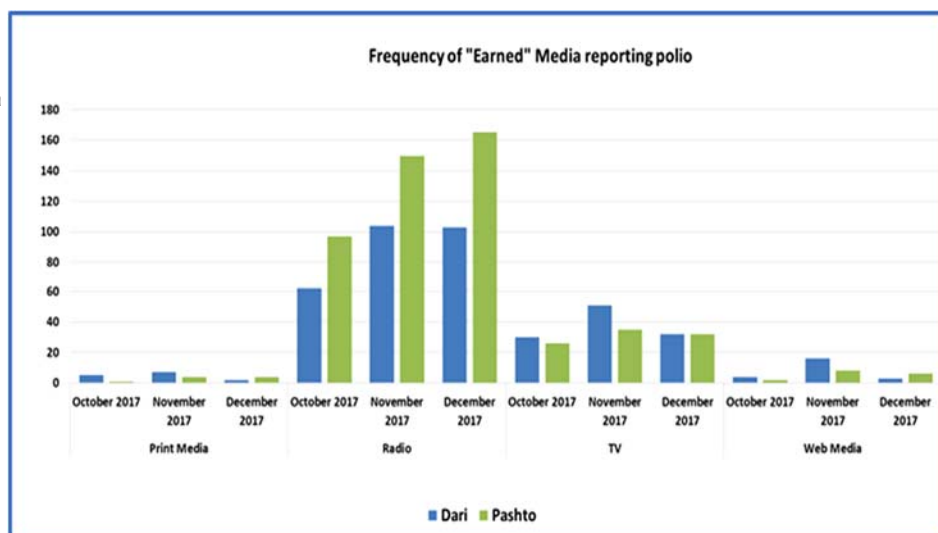
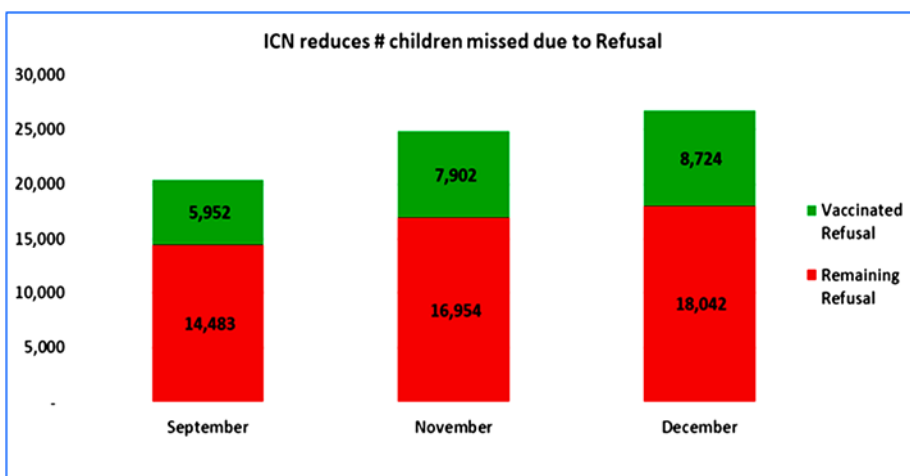
Reducing missed children: A total of 229,635 children were missed in the last three months, of which ICN could vaccinate 53%.

Convincing hard refusals: To convince refusal families and those who have misconceptions or any other concerns to refuse vaccine, ICN takes time in between campaigns to reach refusal families and try convince them using different strategies, giving adequate time to hear their concerns and showing concern for the children's health.

Strengthening Routine EPI: ICN also convinces families to accept vaccinations provided in routine EPI. Monitoring of R.I sessions is conducted by the ICN (731 sessions monitored in the last quarter).

Earned Media: The frequency of earned media increased notably during the last quarter. In particular, the earned radio coverage increased 2-fold between September and December.

Month	Total Missed	Vaccinated by ICN	% vaccinated by ICN
September	69,879	39,075	55.9%
November	80,115	43,654	54.5%
December	79,641	39,814	50.0%
Grand Total	229,635	122,543	53.4%



Month	# of R.I. monitoring by ICN
October	177
November	283
December	271
Grand Total	731

Independent monitoring board reviews progress in polio eradication

The Independent Monitoring Board of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative noted in their report, published December 2017, that despite problems like limitations to monitoring and restricted access, the Afghanistan programme has been effective in innovating and coming up with new ideas to eradicating polio, and has been able to reduce the proportion of missed children from 13% to 6%. Furthermore, they were impressed at the high level of political commitment in the country. [Read the full report here](#)

Technical advisory group commends progress made in polio eradication

The Technical Advisory Group on polio eradication (TAG) met in Kabul in November to review progress and challenges in eradication efforts and provide recommendations. The group commended the improved quality of campaign activities, e.g. rise in vaccine acceptance, noting that most cases were isolated in a few districts. The group agreed that despite the high number of cases and positive environmental samples, with further implementation of the NEAP, transmission can be interrupted. Furthermore the TAG noted that at the start of the low season, Afghanistan is in the best position to stop transmission based on evidence of increased population immunity in high risk areas & improved programme performance. [Read more](#)



Photo: WHO / Tuuli Hongisto

Afghan sports heroes campaign for polio eradication

In December, famous football players from the Afghan Premier League promoted polio eradication in Kandahar – the province with largest number of polio cases in the world. During the first day of a Sub-National vaccination campaign, the players went from door to door vaccinating children. During an interview with a local TV channel, football star Faiz Mohammad Faiz said: “Since Kandahar is a province where most polio cases are found, it is our duty to join hands. I encourage all the families and parents to vaccinate their children every time in order to help their children live a happy and polio-free life, become athletes and bring pride to their nation and family.”



Photo: Naqeebullah Miakhel UNICEF



Photo: Art Lords

New murals painted in Kandahar

To increase public awareness in Kandahar city and the southern border, new murals were painted with polio messages in late 2017. One was painted next to the friendship gate at the Afghanistan and Pakistan border. Local resident Tahir Shah said: “When I came yesterday I saw a sketch drawn on the T wall at the police checkpoint. Later, it was a painting. The picture attracts a lot of people as it is the main highway connecting Kabul and Herat. Everyone can understand that it is about polio vaccination and its importance.” In total, 190 murals have been painted across Afghanistan by Art Lords, a grassroots movement of local artists and volunteers. UNICEF began a partnership with Art Lords in 2017.

Polio campaigns during the first quarter of 2018

29 Jan-2 Feb SNID

12-16 February SNID

12-16 March NID



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