

Current Health Event

Responding to poliomyelitis in Lebanon

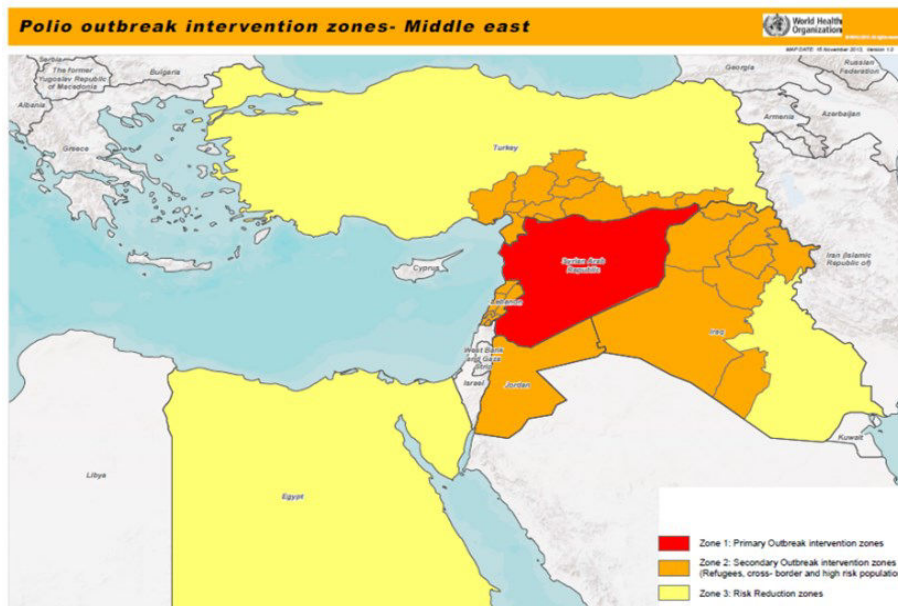
On 28 October 2013, the Minister of Health of Syria announced that after 15 years absence, a total of 39 cases of poliomyelitis have been reported in Syria (27 cases reported by MoH, 12 cases from other sources). Furthermore, Iraq confirmed the first WPV1 case since 2000 in a 6-months old, unvaccinated child who had onset of paralysis on 10 February 2014.

Editorial note:

Detection of wild poliovirus in a polio-free country/area is a public health emergency. Genetic sequencing of the Iraqi case indicates the virus is most closely related to virus detected in December 2013 in Hasakeh, Syria. Given the conflict situation in Syria, frequent population movements across the region, the low immunization level in key areas, and the prolonged period of undetected virus circulation in the region, the risk of further international spread of WPV1 across the region; especially in Lebanon) is considered to be high.

Quarterly reviews of Polio Outbreak Responses are mandated and required by the World Health Assembly Resolution 59.1 focus on determining the speed and effectiveness of the outbreak response as well as identifying gaps in implementation and making recommendations to improve the intervention. It was decided that a comprehensive multi-country Middle East Polio Response Strategic is needed with a goal of interrupting wild poliovirus transmission in Syria and surrounding countries.

In a complex political and security environment, governments with the



assistance and partnership of NGOs and UN agencies, have accessed and vaccinated millions of children in multiple rounds of SIAs. Since October 2013, 24 supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) have been conducted across the region to reach more than 22 million children with multiple doses. In

Middle East Polio Response Strategy:

- Implementing large scale and repeated Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) to stop the outbreak and protect all at risk populations (over 22 million children in 7 countries and territories)
- Enhancing reporting and investigation of acute flaccid paralysis cases (AFP) to ensure rapid detection and response to any WPV transmission.
- Improving routine immunization coverage to provide protection in the longer term and to sustain polio-free status.

Lebanon, 3 nationwide SIAs were conducted. Preparation are being made for additional SIAs. In addition, detection and reporting of AFP cases has been intensified and efforts are underway to strengthen routine immunization against poliomyelitis.

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2013 Cumul	2014 Cumul*	Mar	Apr
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	34(7)	9(4)	3(2)	1(0)
Measles	1760(232)	116(39)	41(11)	12(2)
Mumps	14(2)	14(11)	7(6)	0(0)
Pertussis	59(9)	22(6)	3(0)	0(0)
Rabies	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	27(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	141(8)	37(3)	7(1)	0(0)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	189(12)	27(1)	7(0)	2(0)
Hydatid cyst	13(3)	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	407(21)	40(1)	11(0)	1(1)
Viral Hep A	1551(220)	426(59)	136(13)	1(0)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	1033(1032)	223(222)	50(50)	0(0)
Meningitis	204(24)	42(4)	7(1)	3(0)
Viral Hep C	103(4)	21(1)	4(1)	1(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon . Cumul= Cumulative * to date