



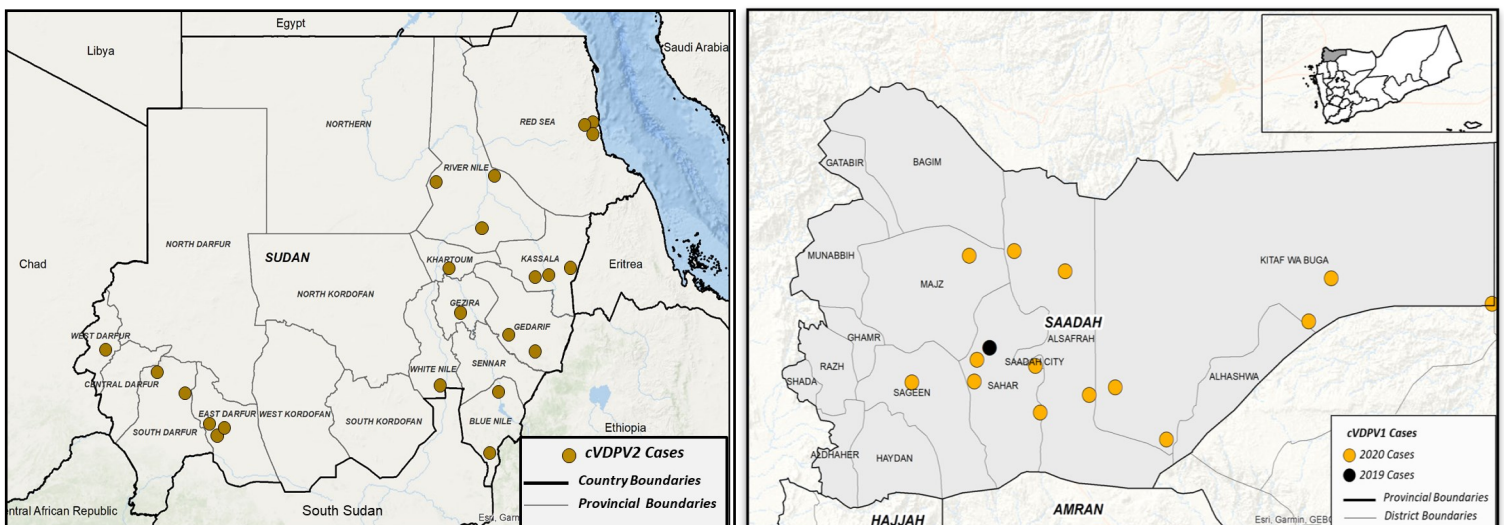
SITUATION UPDATE

- Two new, distinct outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus have been confirmed in 2020, affecting Sudan (cVDPV2) and Yemen (cVDPV1).
 - In August 2020, Sudan detected an outbreak of cVDPV2 through its acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance system. As of Week 37, 22 cases of paralysis in children has been confirmed, across 11 of 18 states in Sudan. The virus has also been found in environmental samples from Khartoum. Epidemiological data complemented by genetic analysis of viruses’ evidence multiple importations from neighboring Chad and subsequent widespread transmission in Sudan.
 - A new emergence of cVDPV1 has been detected in Sa’adah Governorate, Yemen. 15 children have been paralyzed in the outbreak to date. Isolation of virus in samples from 2019 indicate that the virus has likely been circulating since 2019.
- The polio programme is working with respective governments to plan and implement outbreak response activities including enhanced surveillance and lab support, and mass immunization campaigns to close immunity gaps created by a pause in campaigns due to COVID-19.
- Prompted by the two outbreaks, [WHO Eastern Mediterranean and UNICEF MENA Regional Directors have released a joint statement](#) calling for increased unimpeded access to reach children with vaccination and other essential services.

Reported this week:

- **One new cVDPV2 case was reported in Sudan in the last week**, taking the total number of children paralysed in the outbreak to 22. The most recent case has onset of paralysis on 18 August 2020.
- **No new cVDPV1 case was reported this week in Yemen.** The total number of children paralysed during the outbreak to date is 15. The most recent case has onset of paralysis on 5 June 2020.

Distribution of cVDPV2 in Sudan and cVDPV1 in Yemen, 2020



Surveillance:

- Surveillance activities to detect poliovirus transmission in Sudan and Yemen, despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a reduction in the total number of AFP cases reported.
- Environmental surveillance has been established in Sudan's capital, Khartoum. The programme is fast-tracking work to expand the number of collection sites to aid the response. Yemen is exploring the feasibility of establishing environmental sampling as part of enhanced surveillance activities.
- Longstanding delays in stool shipment out of Yemen due to conflict, exacerbated by pandemic-related transport delays, led to late analysis of the 2019 specimen and a delay in detection of the outbreak. Teams are also exploring ways to fast-track a direct detection lab in Sana'a to address this.
- Meanwhile, the programme continues to work concertedly to mitigate the effects of all COVID-19 related delays on surveillance, including ensuring that samples are stored in a good condition at central level until they can be shipped and working with humanitarian partners to find ways to move samples.

Health and Humanitarian Context:

- Insecurity, inaccessibility and weakened health systems continue to hamper efforts to reach every child with important essential services across the region. Bans on house-to-house vaccination in parts of Yemen is negatively impacting the delivery of health services to affected populations. Unhindered access to all areas is necessary to provide health services to those in need.
- The 4-month pause on house-to-house preventative and outbreak campaigns left many of the most vulnerable unprotected against polio. WHO estimates that approximately 80 million polio vaccination opportunities were missed by children in the region due to COVID-19, based on polio vaccination activities that had to be suspended. Waning immunity, particularly against type-2 poliovirus ([post Switch](#)) has contributed to large cohorts of susceptible children.
- The region is experiencing an increased number of measles outbreaks, an indicator of poor routine immunization uptake (source: EMR Measles and Rubella Report, June 2020).
- In Sudan, recent declaration of national emergency due to flooding will likely present significant challenges for delivery of humanitarian, health and nutrition interventions – especially for IDP, rural and hard to reach populations.
- Widespread population movements of nomadic, IDP and rural groups further compound the challenges the programme faces in reaching every child.

REGIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT

- Recent risk assessments (by EMR polio surveillance team) categorized Yemen and Sudan as Very High Risk and High-Risk countries, respectively. Both countries are now considered as Very High Risk / Outbreak Countries.
- AFP surveillance data analysis demonstrates that there is un-even population immunity in Sudan and growing number of under-immunized children in Yemen. Data from Sa'adah Governorate, the sole governorate reporting cases in Yemen, indicates more than half of children have received no OPV doses since 2018.
- Access to all children in both countries for varied reasons remains a key challenge and is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Sudan, unrestricted population movement within the country and neighboring African countries is an additional challenge. In Sa'adah, inability of program to conduct vaccination campaigns since November 2018 has led to significant immunity gap.

Regional coordination:

- A Regional Outbreak Management Group (WHO/UNICEF) has been activated to expedite support to Yemen and Sudan outbreaks through daily/weekly coordination mechanisms.
- The regional team is preparing surge support on a priority basis for lab, cold chain, logistic and vaccine management, surveillance, C4D and communications capacity to address current challenges in Yemen and Sudan outbreaks.
- Polio eradication teams at the Regional and Country levels continue to contribute to the COVID-19 response, particularly in the areas of surveillance (field and laboratory), analytics and communications and coordination. A separate sitrep is being issued regarding the COVID-19 response.

Vaccine logistics:

- Extensive outbreaks of cVDPV2 globally have resulted in considerable constraints on global vaccine supply (for mOPV and previously IPV).
- In Sudan, MOH has signed a request seeking WHO DG approve the release mOPV2 for the response.
- In Yemen, shipment of 2.4 million doses of bOPV (for routine immunization services) has been delayed due to airport closures. This will impact the timing of the first round of the response. Efforts to secure vaccine for campaigns is ongoing. Surge support to Sa'adah from the national level is ongoing to specifically support with cold chain, vaccine management and logistics.

Case Response Preparedness and Implementation update

- Response measures in **Yemen's** Sa'adah governorate, the epi-centre of the outbreak, include integrated outreach and Health Camps covering Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) and polio vaccinations. Activities are planned for October, November, December 2020 and January 2021.
- Additionally, three targeted bOPV vaccination activities opportunities are planned in addition to integrated activities (R0, R1, R2). Round 0, which has been delayed—date TBC, will cover the high-risk neighboring governorates of Amran, Aljawf and Hajjah (in **Yemen's** north). R1 will cover all northern governorates except Sa'adah and R2 will be extended to the whole country for a nationwide campaign except Sa'adah.
- Due to widespread transmission, **Sudan** is planning two nationwide vaccination campaigns using mOPV2. The first round is proposed to begin 4 October 2020. The outbreak response will also focus on improving EPI and providing catch up inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) services as part of R1.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Regional support provided to country teams on external communication, risk communication and community engagement through existing coordination mechanisms with partners, including through the Regional Interagency Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Working Group.
- **In Yemen:**
 - UNICEF and WHO have established a RCCE working group and are meeting once a week
 - Social mapping of potential platforms for community engagement in targeted areas for future integrated vaccination campaign is complete and social mobilization micro-plans for Round 1 is under review
- **In Sudan:**
 - A virtual national planning meeting for Health Promotion Units (Federal Ministry of Health) in 18 States was convened by UNICEF leading to the establishment of 4 sub-committees: Social Mobilization, Coordination and Partnership, Campaign, and Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)
 - A Training of trainers (ToT) has been held for nine Health Promotion Officers to accelerate training in the States for the first campaign in October.
 - An orientation session for the media has been conducted, led by the acting Minister of Health, the WHO and UNICEF Representatives. The session urged journalists to raise community awareness of the outbreak, upcoming vaccination campaign and to support the fight against spreading of rumors.
 - In collaboration with Health Promotion Teams from the 18 States, a rapid assessment is underway, focusing on community perceptions, sources of information and networks. The data will be analyzed to address refusal and mobilize community figures to support the campaigns.



A Rapid Assessment in Sudan's east being undertaken this week to understand community perceptions and sources of information and networks ahead of the upcoming campaign. UNICEF/Sudan

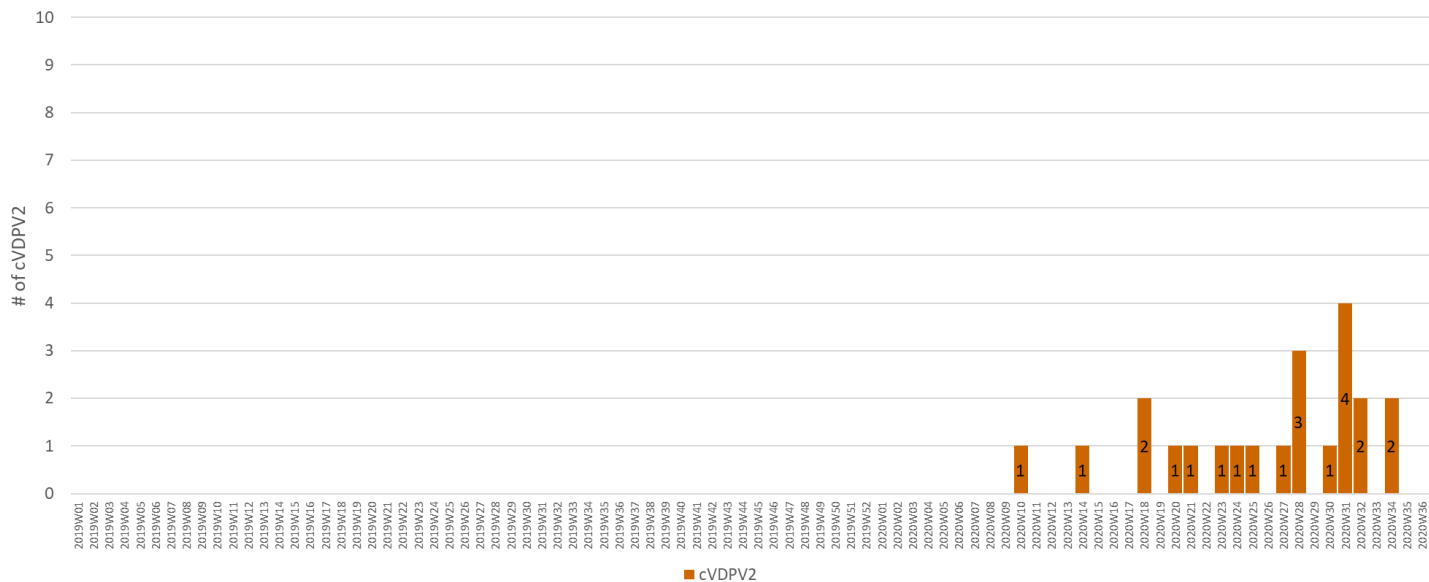
cVDPV2 outbreaks in the EMR:

- The polio programme is also responding to genetically linked cVDPV2 outbreaks affecting **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** which began in 2019 and a protracted outbreak of cVDPV2 in **Somalia**, which was initially detected in late 2017.
- Two mOPV2 case response campaigns are planned in **Somalia's** south and central regions, the first scheduled to begin September 16.
- **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** have implemented two synchronized mOPV2 Case Response rounds for selected populations in July and August 2020.
- Teams across the Region continue to adjust tactics in the context of COVID-19, to ensure all operational outbreak response is planned and executed with the highest safety measures.

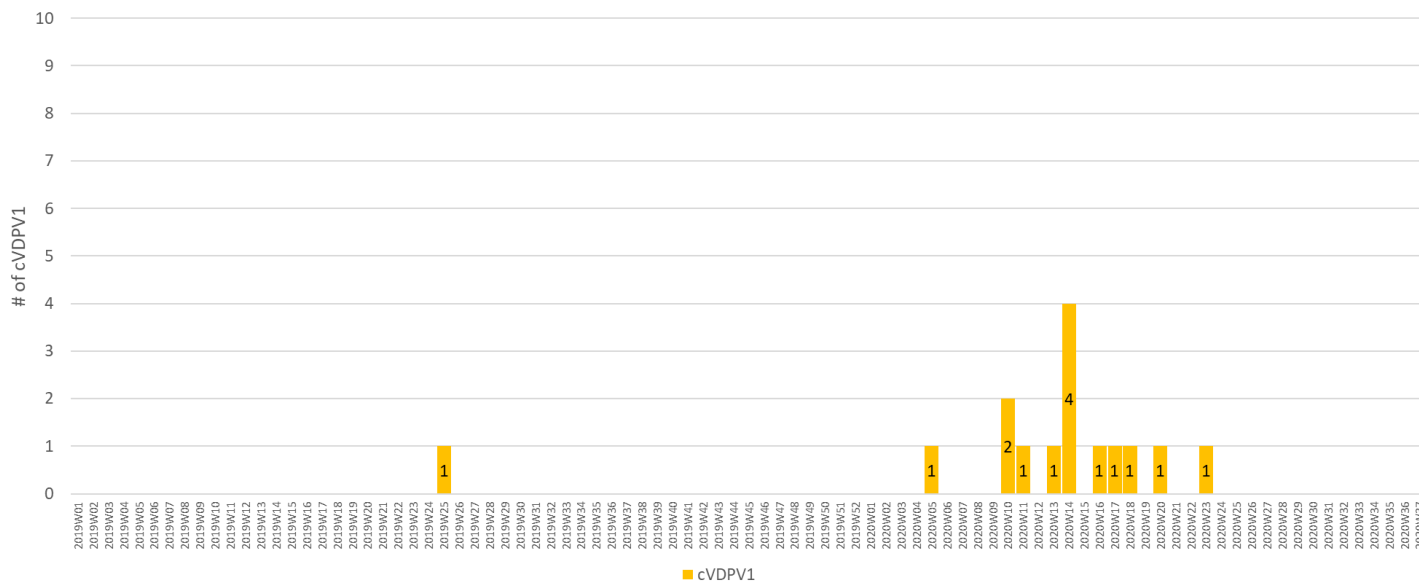


OUTBREAK EPI CURVES

Sudan



Yemen



Relevant links:

- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative \(GPEI\) website](#), updated weekly
- [WATCH: Vaccine-derived polioviruses animation | Responding to an outbreak of VDPV video](#)
- [GPEI factsheet—VDPV](#)
- [What is vaccine-derived polio?](#)
- Or visit the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative website](#) for more information.

Please direct comments and questions to:

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