



# POLIO IN NIGERIA: ONE YEAR WITHOUT A CASE, TWO YEARS TO CERTIFICATION

In 2012, Nigeria seemed to be losing the battle against polio and recorded more than half of all global cases. Just three years later, on 24 July 2015, Nigeria may reach one year without a single case of wild poliovirus – the longest Nigeria has ever gone without a case.

This is an important milestone for the polio program and signals progress toward eradication. But the work is not done – for Nigeria to be certified polio-free, another two years must pass without a case. This will require continued commitment from the Government of Nigeria and its international partners, strong accountability at the state and local governmental area levels to ensure the oral polio vaccine (OPV) reaches every child, improved routine immunization and world-class surveillance to make sure no circulating virus is missed.

Achieving a polio-free Nigeria would bring the world one important step closer to eradication and leave only two countries in the world where the virus has never been stopped: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

## THE PATH TO A POLIO-FREE NIGERIA

Progress against polio in Nigeria is due to the **dedication of tens of thousands of health workers and strong government commitment** to reach every child with the vaccine. Key strategies include:

- **Emergency Operations Centers** were set up in seven locations in northern Nigeria to coordinate polio activities and increase collaboration across the country
- **Strong investment by the national government**, including an increase in domestic funding for polio almost every year since 2012 and \$80 million earmarked for the program in 2015
- **Thousands of health camps** in high-risk and underserved areas to **help build trust and deliver other health services** alongside the polio vaccine
- An increase of **volunteer community mobilizers** – from 2,150 in 2012 to more than 9,500 in 2014 – to ensure strong household and community engagement
- **Special approaches in security compromised areas**, including deploying vaccinators in periods of calm and establishing permanent health teams

### QUICK FACTS

- **Wild polio cases in 2014: 6**
- **Wild polio cases in 2015: 0**
- Most recent wild polio case: 24 July 2014 in Kano state
- Most recent circulating vaccine-derived polio case: 16 May 2015 in Federal Capital Territory
- 97% of children reached with 3+ doses of OPV in the first half of 2015 (compared to 72% in 2014)
- 96% of local government areas in high-risk states achieved at least 80% vaccination coverage in April 2015 (compared to 87% in April 2014)

### POLIO-FREE CERTIFICATION

**24 JULY 2014**

Last wild polio case recorded in Nigeria

**24 JULY 2015**

One year since last wild polio case recorded in Nigeria

**4-6 WEEKS LATER**

All surveillance data finalized. Once all samples are processed and found polio-free and surveillance data meets WHO standards, Nigeria can be taken off the list of polio-endemic countries

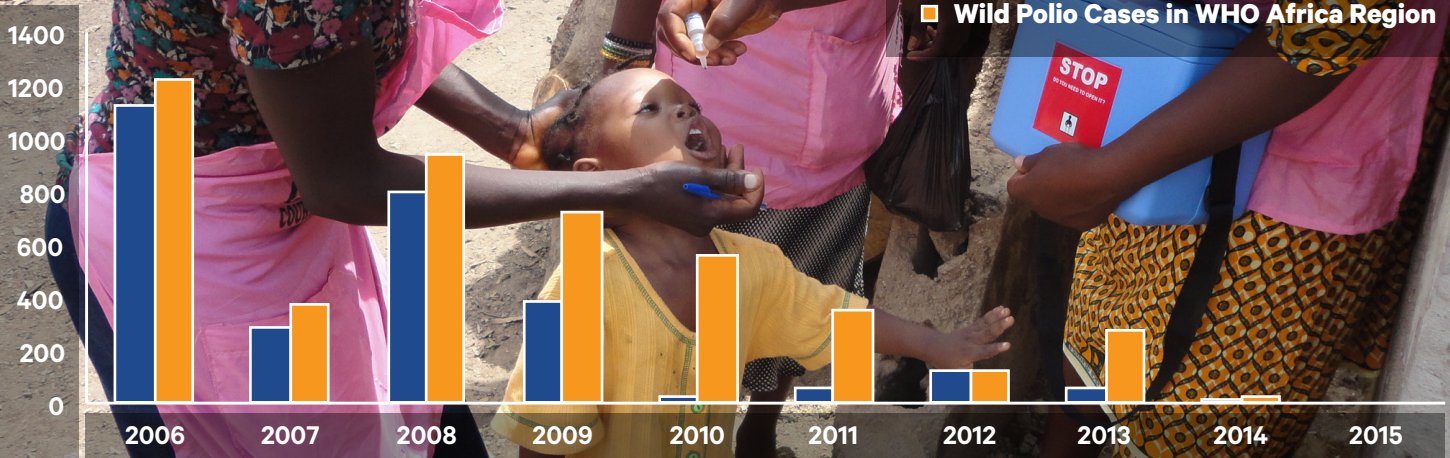
**TWO YEARS LATER (2017)**

The Regional Certification Commission for Africa will review epidemiological and surveillance data from all countries in the region to determine whether the WHO African region can be certified polio-free

# POLIO CASES

■ Wild Polio Cases in Nigeria

■ Wild Polio Cases in WHO Africa Region



## REMAINING CHALLENGES

**While Nigeria has made great progress, it is not yet polio-free. As long as polio remains anywhere in the world, all countries remain at risk.** Therefore, Nigeria must:

- Continue to strengthen vaccination campaigns, particularly in hard-to-reach and insecure areas
- Improve routine immunization
- Strengthen disease surveillance

**Nigeria must also address circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV).** These very rare strains of the virus, mutated from a strain originally contained in OPV, can emerge in under-immunized populations. CVDPV circulation has been isolated in environmental surveillance in Kaduna in 2015 and one case was reported in the Federal Capital Territory in May 2015. To stop cVDPV, Nigeria must:

- **Reach children everywhere** with trivalent polio vaccine (which protects against type 2 polio) to ensure there is no remaining cVDPV in the country
- Participate in the global **switch from trivalent to bivalent OPV** (planned for April 2016), which poses a lower risk of cVDPV to avoid future cVDPV emergence
- Continue to **roll out the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV)**, which boosts immunity and cannot cause cVDPV

## CASE STUDY: REACHING EVERY CHILD

In Gaya, Nigeria, Halima Ibrahim Zubair is known as “Maman Polio.” This name is a perfect fit for this woman who works tirelessly to ensure every child in her community is vaccinated against the crippling virus.

A mother of six herself, Halima and her vaccination team have been instrumental in increasing the number of children vaccinated in Gaya. Today, through the team’s unflagging efforts to educate community members about the importance of vaccination, over 95% of children in the area have received the polio vaccine.

Halima’s work to improve health does not stop at polio – she also supports a host of other community needs, including digging wells to improve sanitation and pooling resources to pay for transport to the hospital for pregnant women. By going the extra mile to help each community get the health services it needs, Halima and other community mobilizers like her have become critical partners in the effort to build a healthier and polio-free Nigeria.

## WORKING TOWARD A FUTURE WITHOUT POLIO

Nigeria’s gains against polio are promising, but this success should not be taken for granted. The final steps to eradicate polio from Nigeria, for good, require continued commitment at every level.

We must seize this window of opportunity to ensure all future generations of children are free from this devastating disease – achieving eradication in Nigeria and Africa will bring us closer than ever to a world without polio.