

## Tajikistan Polio Outbreak and Regional Response

### Summary

As of 12 July 2010, Tajikistan had reported 413 laboratory-confirmed cases of wild poliovirus type 1, with 19 deaths (4.6%). The latest confirmed poliomyelitis (polio) cases had disease onset on 6 June 2010. Six cases had been laboratory confirmed for wild poliovirus type 1 in the Russian Federation, the only country outside Tajikistan to confirm cases.

Four rounds of national immunization days (NIDs) in Tajikistan and three rounds in Uzbekistan had occurred. In both countries coverage was extremely high and confirmed by independent monitors. The first round of nationwide NIDs started in Turkmenistan on 12 July 2010, and Kyrgyzstan started its first round on 19 July.

was certified as polio free in 2002. As of 12 July 2010, Tajikistan had reported 413 laboratory-confirmed cases of wild poliovirus type 1.

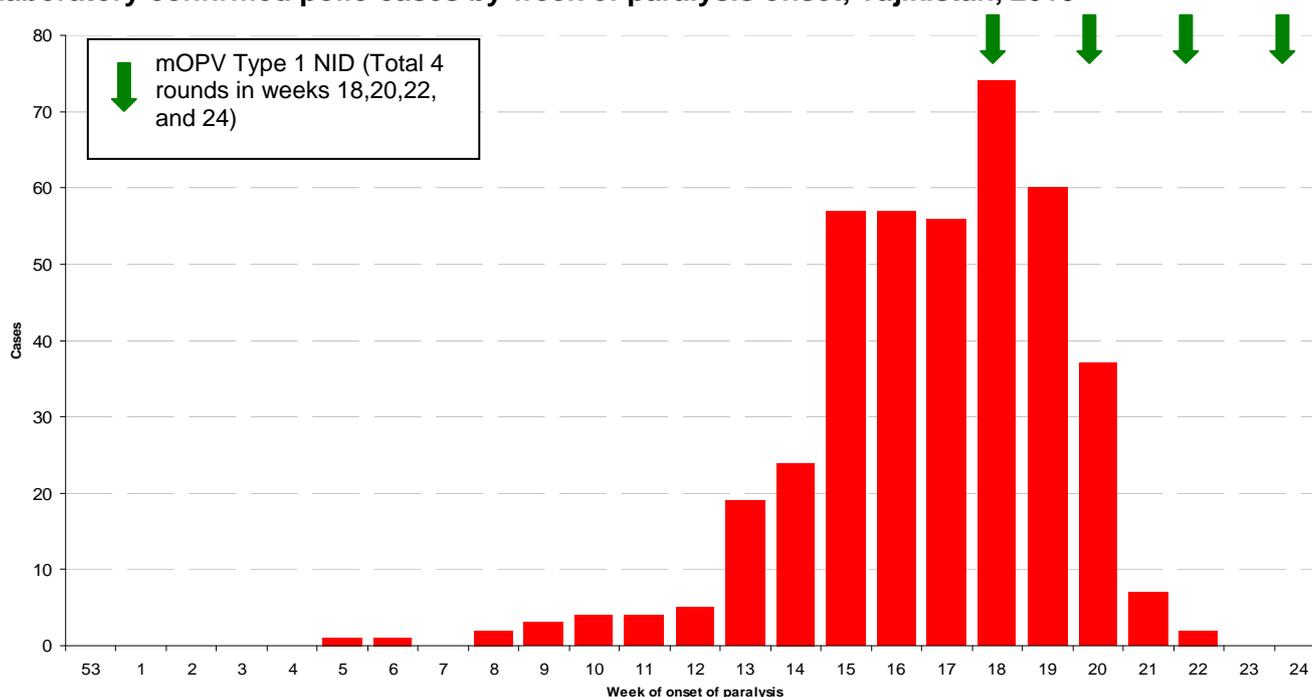
These cases were reported from 31 of 61 administrative territories (58 districts and 3 cities – Dushanbe, Khudjand and Kurgan-Tube). There was no evidence of transmission to Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous oblast (GBAO) and Sughd oblast. No acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases had been laboratory confirmed for wild poliovirus since 6 June, so the outbreak is believed to be on a downward trend.

There had been 19 deaths among the confirmed polio cases (4.6%): 4 in infants (aged under 1 year), 7 in children aged 1–5 years, 6 in children aged 6–14 and 2 in people aged 15 or older. Of the 413 confirmed cases, 87 (21%) were in infants (aged under 1 year), 212 (51%) in children aged 1–5 years, 80 (19%) in children aged 6–14 and 34 (8%) in people aged 15 or older.

The WHO European Region has experienced the first importation of wild poliovirus into the Region since it

In addition, six AFP cases had been laboratory

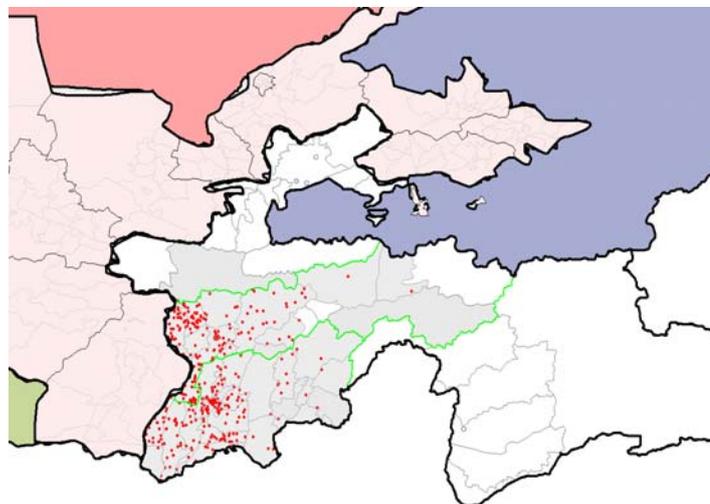
### Laboratory confirmed polio cases by week of paralysis onset, Tajikistan, 2010\*



Note: Total 413 confirmed wild poliovirus type 1

\*Data as of 12 July 2010

confirmed for wild poliovirus type 1 in the Russian Federation, the only country outside Tajikistan to confirm polio cases. To date, four of the six cases are imported. Molecular sequencing of the viruses showed that they are all related to the outbreak in Tajikistan.



- = 1 case (Total 413 cases as of 12 July, 2010)
- = Districts with AFP Cases

At this stage, AFP surveillance is critical to ensure that any spread of poliovirus will be rapidly detected, and to show the effectiveness of aggressive control measures to interrupt transmission.

## National Immunization Days

In Tajikistan, the fourth round of supplemental immunization activities (SIAs) was conducted on 15–19 June, except in Dushanbe and six surrounding regions, where it started on 13 June. Preliminary officially reported data report nationwide coverage of 99.3%. Coverage higher than 97% is reported from all regions and in the groups aged 0–6 and 7–15 years. The need for additional rounds of SIAs will be considered in the light of the epidemiological data on the outbreak and laboratory results.

In Uzbekistan, the third round of SIAs was conducted on 5–9 July, and final reported nationwide coverage is 100.5%<sup>a</sup>, with 2 910 617 people immunized. Reported administrative coverage in the provinces is 99.8–106.7%. National coverage during the second round of SIAs was 100.4% (2 895 946 people immunized). Independent monitoring data show similarly high results.

<sup>a</sup> Coverage over 100% means that more people were vaccinated than in the catchment area. This is usually due to an under-estimation of the population size, or due to migration of populations.

The first round of nationwide SIAs with monovalent oral polio vaccine type 1 (mOPV1) in Kyrgyzstan is planned for 19–23 July and the second for 23–27 August. The Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan is performing an assessment of the health system's capacity to identify human resources for SIAs. WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are following up on these issues with national counterparts.

Cascade training for NIDs started in Kyrgyzstan from 30 June, moving from oblasts in the northern part of the country. In the southern regions, special communication and social mobilization strategies will be implemented to ensure the highest possible immunization coverage.

In Turkmenistan, the first round of nationwide NIDs started on 12 July, targeting all children aged 0–5 years. Major cities (Ashgabat and Turkmenbashi) started immunization activities earlier, on 24 May, and preliminary reported vaccination coverage was 99.5%. The second round of NIDs will be carried out on 16–22 August.

## Certification commission meeting, June 2010

The WHO Regional Office for Europe held the 23rd meeting of the European Regional Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 28–29 June 2010. In her opening remarks, Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab, the WHO Regional Director for Europe, highlighted the importance of the outbreak in Tajikistan, noting that it threatened both the polio-free status of the Region and the eradication of polio globally.

The Commission recognizes that the European Region has reached a critical juncture and its polio-free status is in jeopardy. The gravity of the situation requires that all Member States reinforce their polio surveillance so that any spread will be detected rapidly and effective control measures instituted at the earliest possible moment.

Contact us:

Dr Rebecca Martin, Team Leader

Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunization

World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe

Denmark Tel.: +45 39 17 12 16

E-mail: [rma@euro.who.int](mailto:rma@euro.who.int)

<http://www.euro.who.int>