



Healthy Migrants in Healthy Communities - IOM Cairo supports the Ministry of Health in delivering Polio vaccines to migrant and Egyptian children across Egypt

6th February 2014- The Egyptian Ministry of Health, through its Extended Program of Immunization (EPI) and with the support of the International Organization of Migration (IOM), launched a Polio vaccination campaign, which took place from December 29th to January 1st 2014. The three day campaign aimed to provide the Polio vaccine to migrant, refugee and Egyptian children across Egypt. IOM's role in the campaign was to improve and protect the health of vulnerable migrant and host communities in Egypt, through:

- Facilitating the polio vaccination of 2,792 children;
- Raising awareness on the risks of Polio and addressing the misconceptions concerning vaccination among the various migrant communities through the deployment of 27 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in Cairo and Giza governorates;
- Providing direct assistance to six areas densely populated by migrants and escorting migrants to different primary health care centers located throughout Egypt, including the Cairo and Giza governorates;
- Accompanying the Polio vaccination campaign cars in outreach activities to remote areas; and,
- Assisting the campaign in activities targeting border areas in Matruh, South Sinai, Aswan and the Red sea which were only accessible using highly efficient four wheel drive cars.

Polio is a virus that infects children under five years of age leading to irreversible paralysis, respiratory failure and death. Polio infection can be prevented with a simple and widely available vaccination.

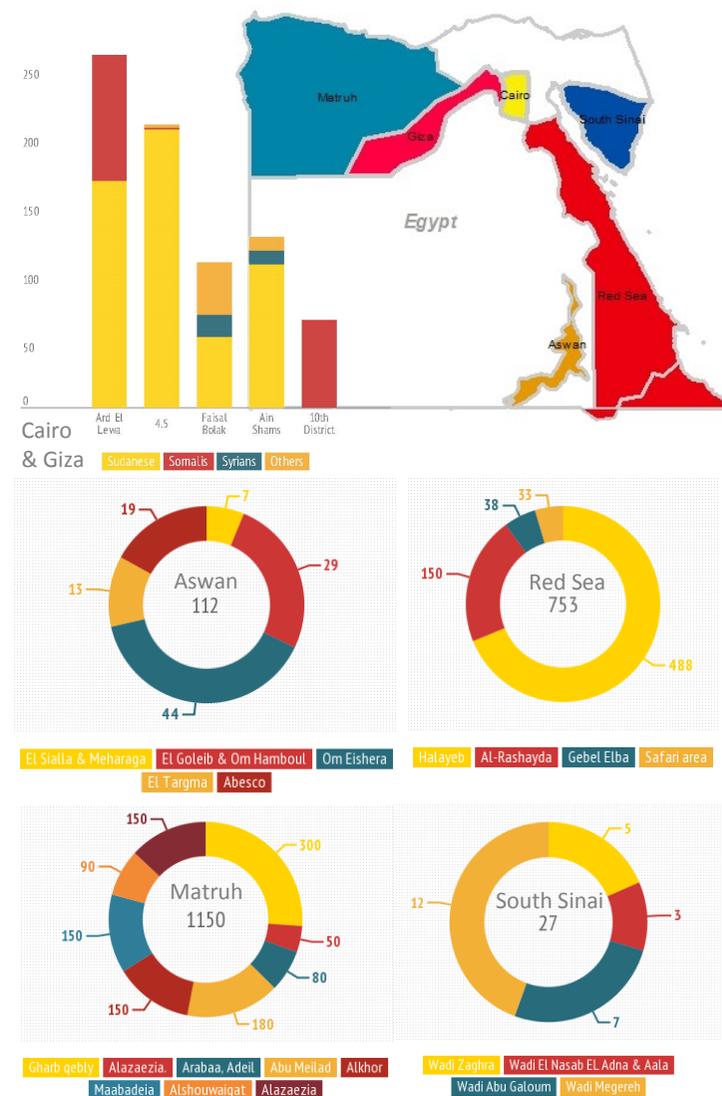
Egypt has been Polio free since 2004; the last case was reported in Assiut in May 2004. The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), which Egypt initiated in 1968, has been quite effective in reducing the incidence of Polio through mandatory and routine vaccinations.

Since 2002 Polio vaccinations have been administered through house to house national campaigns with an average of two national campaign days per year. The most recent national campaign was carried out in November 2013. These effective strategies have helped eradicate the spread of the unpredictable Polio virus in Egypt.

In addition to contributing to the fight against Polio and providing vaccinations to a large number of vulnerable populations, IOM has also strengthened its relationships with public health providers through this campaign and helped engender trust between migrant communities and Egypt's healthcare systems particularly in areas of Greater Cairo.

IOM's collaboration with governorates on Egypt's border has facilitated improved healthcare assistance to populations residing in transit areas that are remote and difficult to access. These IOM outreach activities ensure that both Egyptian nationals and migrants receive proper vaccinations in accordance with

IOM's aim to achieve "Healthy Migrants in Healthy Communities".



For more information please contact Dr. Mohamed Refaat at mrefaat@iom.int