

**Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination**

PRESS RELEASE

**Ministry of NHR&C Poliovirus targets two more children; fails to
cause paralysis “Vaccination of every child imperative till full
eradication” PM Focal Person On Polio**

ISLAMABAD, 17 October 2018— The National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for Polio Eradication has notified two new polio cases from Gadap, Karachi and Khyber tribal district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bringing the total number of polio cases in the country to six this year, however the virus failed to cause any clinical paralysis to both the children. The first case of polio was confirmed in a 42 month-old female child from Gadap, Karachi, and the other case in a 55-month old female child from Khyber tribal district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The lab. detected Polio virus from their stool samples on the 1st of October and 30th September respectively. Fortunately, both girls had received multiple doses of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) which boosted their immunity and protected them from a life-long paralysis. “The polio virus has been continuously found in the sewage waters of Peshawar and Karachi for the last 12 months,” said Babar Bin Atta, the Prime Minister’s Focal Person for Polio Eradication “The programme will continue to focus on clearing these two remaining reservoirs from the virus with full force.” he remarked. “The multiple vaccine doses gave the children the immunity boost to fight off the poliovirus attack. They have no residual weaknesses and will live like normal children,” said Dr. Rana Safdar, National Coordinator for Polio Eradication while appreciating the vigilant health workers who picked these cases with atypical clinical presentations. “This why it’s important for every under five-year-old child to be vaccinated in every round, so immunity levels are high enough to fight off the virus in its entirety.” He said. Earlier this year, three polio cases were reported from Dukki District in Balochistan province, while one case was reported from the Charsadda district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Being fully vaccinated in routine and door to door campaigns, the Charsadda child had also escaped paralysis. The wild polio virus case numbers in Pakistan are the lowest ever and the immunity gaps continue to fall. However, despite this historic progress, Mr. Bin Atta said: “We cannot afford any let up in our efforts because as long as the virus is being detected anywhere in the country, no child is absolutely safe.” Multiple doses of polio vaccine are required for a child to be fully protected – each additional dose further strengthens a child’s immunity level against polio. Contrarily, every missed child provides a place for the polio virus to hide. “Any child with low immunity will be where the virus will find refuge. We need to ensure all our children have received all of their routine immunizations and are vaccinated, with two drops, every time the vaccine is offered,” Mr. Bin Atta added. “Parents who do not ensure vaccination of their children are risking health and lives of their own children as

well as others around them. It is thus the responsibility of communities to help identifying and vaccinating such children,” said Mr. Bin Atta. “We are closest ever to the goal of polio eradication. But to achieve it, we must all come together as a nation to ensure that every child is vaccinated. This is the only way we can collectively ensure that we rid polio from our land.” He remarked.