

Somalia free of polio once again

March 26 2008

The World Health Organization said Somalia is once again polio-free thanks to the efforts of 10,000 health workers and volunteers.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative described the effort as a "historic achievement" in public health. The last reported case of polio in Somalia was in March 2007, the WHO said Tuesday in a news release. More than 10,000 Somali volunteers and health workers vaccinated more than 1.8 million children under the age of five by visiting every household in every settlement multiple times.

"This truly historic achievement shows that polio can be eradicated everywhere, even in the most challenging and difficult settings," Dr. Hussein A. Gezairy of the WHO said in a statement.

Somalia had eradicated the disease in 2002 but became re-infected in 2005 from polio virus that originated in Nigeria, the health organization said.

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