

## Sierra Leone joins eight West African states in polio eradication

October 19 2012

---

Over 70.000 health workers and community volunteers were combing the streets and jungle paths in Sierra Leone Friday at the start of a vaccination programme targetting young children in the West African country.

The four-day vaccination drive dubbed "Kick [polio](#) out of [Sierra Leone](#)" is focusing on some 1.3 million children under the age of five.

Nurse Selina Joseph said she was taking part in the exercise for the first time and remarked on the women's desire to protect their children from the crippling disease.

"The area I am assigned to is generally regarded as a hard-to-reach hilly slope but by the time we reached level ground, there were women, some with babies strapped to their backs and others with three to four frightened children sitting or standing on perched rocks waiting for us to administer the doses. It was all like going to an excursion," she said.

The health ministry's programme manager, Dr Thomas Samba, who is coordinating the initiative told AFP: "The vaccination exercise in Sierra Leone is being undertaken simultaneously with eight other ECOWAS states - Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, [Burkina Faso](#) and Mali."

On the current state of the disease in Sierra Leone, Samba said, "It is good news that new cases of polio have not been found over the last two

years but we are not relenting as new cases are being recorded in other countries in the West African sub-region."

"It is of great concern when polio becomes a threat as a child plagued by polio is a loss to the nation," he said.

Samba noted that the last episode of polio in Sierra Leone occurred in February 2010 involving about 12 confirmed cases.

According to [health ministry](#) records, the Geneva-based Gavi Alliance, an organisation which distributes vaccines to the world's [poorest countries](#), has committed 24 million dollars from March 2009 to the immunization programme in Sierra Leone.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Sierra Leone joins eight West African states in polio eradication (2012, October 19) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-sierra-leone-west-african-states.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.