

Nigeria nearing six months without single polio case

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Nigeria was on Tuesday awarded \$8.1 million in funding for a final push to eradicate polio, as it nears six months without a case of the disease.

Rotary International, which is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to wipe out the virus, said the money would go towards vaccination, research and surveillance programmes.

Nigeria is one of three countries worldwide where [polio](#) is considered endemic. The two others are Pakistan and Afghanistan.

But there is concern about reinfections in war-torn countries such as Somalia and Syria because of disruption to immunisation programmes.

The last case of the [polio virus](#) in Nigeria was on July 24 in the northern state of Kano. Last year, the country recorded a total of six cases, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

That compares with 53 in 2013, the group said on its website, [polioeradication.org](#).

"Nigeria has managed an incredible feat," the head of Rotary's polio campaign in Nigeria, Tunju Funsho, said in a statement.

"Our country has gone six months without a new case of the disease. However, now we must be more vigilant than ever, as our progress is fragile."

Rotary said seven other African countries would receive funding totalling \$18.5 million to stem outbreaks.

Pakistan, which had the highest number of polio cases with 297 last year, will receive \$1.1 million while Afghanistan, which had 28 cases in 2014, has been awarded \$6.7 million, it added.

Polio vaccination programmes in the three endemic [countries](#) have been hit by violence.

In Nigeria, some hardline Muslim clerics have viewed immunisation programmes, which focus especially on children, as a Western plot to depopulate Africa.

In 2014, there were only 350 confirmed polio cases in the world, down from about 350,000 a year when the global eradication programme began in 1988.

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