

# WHO certifies Gabon as polio-free

December 16 2017

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The World Health Organization has declared Gabon a "polio-free country", given the lack of new reported or suspected cases in the central African country.

According to a WHO statement obtained by AFP on Saturday, the UN health agency nonetheless recommended taking the necessary steps to continue monitoring for possible signs of the disease.

Gabon's Health Minister Denise Mekam'ne Edzidzie also urged families on Saturday to "continue to immunise children and prevent a resurgence of this disease".

Polio is a highly-infectious viral disease which mainly affects [young children](#) and can result in permanent paralysis. There is no cure and it can only be prevented through immunisation.

Cases of polio have decreased by 99 percent since 1988, when polio was endemic in 125 countries and 350,000 cases were recorded worldwide.

Now the disease is endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the WHO recorded four cases this year—two in each country. Last year, there were 37 [cases](#) globally.

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