

Pakistan reports first polio case in 15 months

April 23 2022

Pakistan's prime minister said Saturday he will chair an emergency meeting of a national task force for polio eradication after authorities detected the country's first case of the debilitating neurodegenerative disease in 15 months.

Health officials announced the discovery of the wild polio case on Friday, saying a 15-month-old boy had been paralysed by the virus in the northwestern district of North Waziristan.

"Deeply saddened to share that a 15-month-old boy has been paralyzed in North Waziristan," tweeted Shahzad Baig, a coordinator with the National Emergency Operations Centre for Pakistan's [polio eradication](#) programme.

"Pakistan confirms a wild #poliovirus case after nearly 15 [months](#)," he added.

The country's last case was detected in January 2021, and earlier this year authorities celebrated going 12 months without a single case—the first time that had occurred since eradication efforts began.

Pakistan is one of two countries, alongside neighbouring Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic, although case numbers have dropped drastically in recent years.

The case in North Waziristan takes the global number of polio cases in 2022 to three, with a case also confirmed in Malawi and another in

Afghanistan, according to data from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

The case in Malawi was confirmed in February although the onset of paralysis came in November 2021, according to the GPEI.

Pakistani authorities said they were working on ensuring the virus does not spread further in the South Asian country.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's office said he would preside over the emergency meeting of the polio eradication task force on Monday.

Nigeria officially eradicated wild polio in 2020. Pakistani officials said in February that they were hoping to achieve the same goal in the coming years.

To officially eradicate the disease a country must be [polio](#)-free for three consecutive years.

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