

No new malaria cases in Europe, Caucasus or C.Asia in 2015

20 April 2016

No new cases of malaria originated in Europe, Central Asia or the Caucasus in 2015, the first year without a transmission for almost 30 years, the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

Between 1995 and 2015, the number of "indigenous"—or locally transmitted—malaria cases fell from 90,712 to zero in [countries](#) located in the WHO's European region.

"By 2010, only 179 cases of malaria were reported in six countries," the agency said in a report.

"However, 2011 and 2012 saw renewed malaria transmission—in Georgia (isolated cases) and in Greece and Turkey (localised outbreaks)—due to importation from endemic countries (Afghanistan, India and Pakistan)," it added.

The region was last declared malaria free in 1975.

Until the end of World War II, it was common in southern Europe, including Portugal, Italy, the Balkans and Greece.

In the 1980s and 1990s, it reappeared in the Caucasus, the Central Asian republics and, to a lesser extent in Russia, as a result of the war in Afghanistan and the fall of the Soviet Union.

"Until malaria is eradicated globally, people travelling to and from malaria-endemic countries can import the disease to Europe, and we have to keep up the good work to prevent its reintroduction," said Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO regional director for Europe in a statement.

There were 438,000 malaria deaths in 2015, most of them children under five with the vast majority in Africa.

Although efforts to control the disease have made significant progress in the last 15 years, that progress is threatened by mosquitoes' growing

resistance to [antimalarial drugs](#) and to insecticide, the WHO said in its World Malaria Report 2015.

"Experience shows that [malaria](#) can spread rapidly, and if Europe's countries are not vigilant and responsive, a single imported case can result in resurgence," said Nedret Emiroglu, a director in WHO's Europe office.

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