

Video: Polio Vaccination Efforts in Khost, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Monir Bahar

CONTRIBUTOR: Roshan Noorzai

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VIDEOGRAPHER: [Blank]

VIDEO EDITOR: Monir Bahar

SCRIPT EDITORS: KEnochs; MAS

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EDITOR NOTES: Note Tuesday, Oct. 24 is World Polio Day.

INTRO

[[Inayat Amran, a resident of eastern Khost province in Afghanistan, has been working as a poliovirus vaccination volunteer for the past three years. Polio remains endemic in only two countries in the world: Afghanistan and Pakistan. VOA's Monir Bahar reports from Mandozayi, Khost. Bezhan Hamdard narrates.]]

NARRATOR

26-year-old Inayat Arman is going door to door to make sure that every child in the area receives drops of poliovirus vaccination.

Arman, who has volunteered for Polio vaccination for the last three years in his native district of Mandozayi, also known as Ismail Khel, in Khost province, is trying to make sure he reaches everyone in the region.

Inayat Arman, Polio Vaccination Volunteer (Male, in Pashto)

“We start an awareness campaign two days before we go to an area. We inform families about the campaign so they can keep their children at home.”

NARRATOR

Arman, however, accepts there are “a few” families who are just unwilling to give their children their vaccine.

Inayat Arman, Polio Vaccination Volunteer (Male, in Pashto)

“In the area that I administer the vaccine, there are a few families, like about four to five, refusing [to give vaccination to their children]. The rest, about 122 families, cooperate and bring their children for vaccination.”

NARRATOR

Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan are the only two countries in the world where wild poliovirus type 1 is reported.

In 2023, six cases of poliovirus type 1 were reported in Afghanistan’s Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, but no positive poliovirus cases were reported in the eastern province of Khost.

Locals credit the coordination between locals and vaccinators and the hard work of volunteers paid off.

Local tribal leader Haji Khalil also supports the mission.

Haji Khalil, Local Tribal Leader (Male, Pashto)

“They [volunteers] serve the country. They are taking care of the children. They are giving them vaccinations. When children miss vaccination, they come to us, even after three days, telling us ‘Bring the children so we give the vaccination.’”

NARRATOR

Arman says that it is important that every child receive the poliovirus vaccination in order to eradicate the virus.

He hopes that Afghanistan will become a polio-free country soon.

((For Monir Bahar in Khost, Afghanistan – Bezhan Hamdard – VOANEWS))