



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Statement by the

Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG)

on the occasion of

World Polio Day

4 Safar 1439 - 24 October 2017

Praise be to Allah and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Mohammed, and upon his kin and companions.

The march towards polio eradication continues as fewer and fewer children are being paralyzed by the wild polio virus each year. While an estimated 350,000 children were paralyzed worldwide in 1988, only 12 cases have been reported so far in 2017, a testament to the dedication of health workers and the governments who are putting all their efforts into seeing an end to this debilitating disease. As Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "And say: 'Work (righteousness): Soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers'." (Al-Tawbah:105)

Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria are the only remaining countries in the world that have not seen interruption in the transmission of the wild polio virus. And while Nigeria has not seen a case in more than 12 months, the virus still circulates in limited areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is imperative upon all parents to vaccinate their children against polio, an incurable disease which Allah has blessed us with a safe vaccine to protect them with.

Religious scholars, technical experts, and academics within the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG), along with its member organizations of Al Azhar Al Sharif, the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Islamic Development Bank, have been supporting the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) to achieve its goal of protecting current and future generations from the perils of this preventable disease. And in the spirit of Allah's command to the faithful, "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression," (Al-Mai'dah:2) the IAG with its network of local religious imams urges parents to cooperate with health workers during vaccination campaigns by giving access to their children each time they visit their homes. If all parents heed this call with no child being missed, they will not only be protecting their children in the short term, but by the will of Allah will be protecting their whole community and all the generations

to come, never to see another human being suffer from polio-induced paralysis once eradication has been achieved. “And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Al-Nahl:18)

After decades if not centuries of children suffering in Pakistan and Afghanistan, these countries can achieve what over 120 other countries already have since the GPEI started in 1988: they can stop the transmission of the wild polio virus among their children and so stop seeing any child suffer the consequences of its lifelong paralysis. This goal can only be achieved through the willful support of all parents to the work of their governments and their international partners within GPEI.

May Allah bless all our efforts and reward us in this life and the hereafter.