

Nigeria starts emergency polio vaccinations

17 August 2016

Nigeria said Wednesday it has launched a mass campaign of emergency polio vaccinations after reporting two new cases of the disease earlier in August.

Both new cases were diagnosed in the northeastern state of Borno, which has been ravaged by Boko Haram insurgents, highlighting the difficulty of providing basic [health](#) services in the impoverished region.

"So far we have commenced vaccination of children," health minister Isaac Adewole told reporters in the capital Abuja, after the [campaign](#) started on Monday.

Local authorities in the affected areas "have had their health facilities destroyed by insurgents and accessibility was a barrier to service provision," Adewole said.

One of the new cases, a child from the Jere local government area, was diagnosed in a displaced persons camp in Borno state capital Maiduguri after "trekking for two days", the health minister said.

The Nigerian vaccination campaign will be coordinated with neighbouring countries with a focus on the Lake Chad region and northern Cameroon.

The new cases—believed linked to a 2011 case of polio in Bama, another town in Borno—represent a major health setback for Nigeria, which was on track to be certified free of the virus next year.

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 be only prevented through immunisation.

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