21 April 2016 -- More than one million children in Libya have been immunized against polio in a 5-day national campaign concluding today. The campaign is the first to be held in Libya since 2014.

Approximately 2000 vaccinators in 600 health facilities around the country participated in the campaign which was conducted by the Ministry of Health's National Centre for Disease Control, with support from WHO and UNICEF.

"This is a truly significant achievement in ensuring Libya maintains its polio-free status," said Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain, WHO Representative for Libya. "Interruptions in routine immunization as a result of the conflict have placed children in Libya at prolonged risk of infectious diseases. ÂÂ Parents are desperate to keep their children safe and healthy, and the high level of demand was such that health facilities were overcrowded in the first days of the campaign."

Ongoing violence in Libya has created challenges for the provision of health care services, including immunization services. Health facilities are faced with critical shortages of health staff and insecurity has restricted transportation and contributed to shortages of medicines and medical supplies.

"Despite the challenges faced, including extremely limited funding for the health sector, WHO and partners continue to ensure that urgently needed basic health care services in Libya are provided. This campaign is a positive step towards ensuring that with increased support, ÂÂ vulnerable Libyans have access to the health services they need," said Dr Hussain.

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