

On verge of extinction, polio sweeps through Pakistan thanks to anti-vax movement

Polio is making a troubling comeback in Pakistan, and it is being driven by some of the same forces spreading [measles in the United States](#).

Two years after health officials declared they were on the verge of eradicating the crippling childhood disease from Pakistan, one of the last countries where it remains endemic, at least 58 children here have tested positive for the virus since January.

That is nearly five times the total of all of last year, and the most in a calendar year since 2014 — a major setback for a \$1-billion-a-year [global eradication campaign](#).

Some 2 million Pakistani households have refused immunizations for children since April, when reports circulated on television channels, Facebook and Twitter that children had fallen ill after a vaccination drive at a school in the northern city of Peshawar.

None of those adverse reactions were serious enough to require hospitalization, according to health officials. But the rumors revived [long-standing myths](#) about the dangers of vaccinations.

...

The resurgence of the virus has embarrassed [Prime Minister Imran] Khan, who pledged to make polio eradication a “topmost priority” and launched a new communication strategy — backed by \$10 million from international donors — to combat misinformation.

Read full, original post: [Polio was nearly extinct. Then the anti-vaxx movement reached Pakistan](#)