

Issue 15/2024

WHO Public Health Report

Bosnia and Herzegovina

25 October 2024

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Disclaimer: The document was developed by WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. WHO CO BIH provides scientific and technical advice to public health authorities and health care providers. WHO CO BIH work is guided by the current best available evidence at the time of publication.

THE UNSEEN TOLL OF FLOODS: PRIORITIZING MENTAL WELL-BEING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Climate change is intensifying extreme weather globally and Bosnia and Herzegovina is reeling from some of the most severe flooding in a decade. Heavy rains triggered catastrophic floods, particularly in the southern and central regions, devastating communities in Jablanica, Kiseljak, Kreševo, Fojnica and Vareš.

In Jablanica, a small town just 60 kilometres southwest of Sarajevo, volunteer Dino Dzevlan described the speed and impact of the disaster. *“Everything happened too quickly to react, and the sheer scale of this disaster is too much for a small municipality like Jablanica.”*

Despite the chaos, Dzevlan praised the community's resilience. *“When the civil protection call went out, over 100 people were ready to help. We did everything we could, from cleaning houses to clearing roads, delivering food and water. In such a situation, you cannot expect more from ordinary people.”*

Ramiza Ustović, a resident of Buturović Polje near Jablanica, credits her neighbours with her survival. *“I was sleeping when everything happened,”* she recalls.

This solidarity is crucial as recovery efforts continue, but the strain is evident. Alma Budim Hondo, director of a local primary health-care facility warned, *“We are close to burn-out, and we need all the help we can get.”*

Read the story here: [The unseen toll of floods: Prioritizing mental well-being in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL WELL-BEING IN THE AFTERMATH OF FLOODS MUST NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED



Op-ed by Erwin Cooreman, WHO Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

WCO BIH published an op-ed on mental health in the aftermath of the floods. This was amplified through various newspapers and TV channels across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The op-ed brought attention to the theme of this year's mental health day ("mental health in the workplace") with a special focus on addressing mental health needs in emergency situations.

After a long, dry summer, communities in the southern and central parts of the country were hit by rising waters and landslides that wreaked havoc on infrastructure, cut off access to key roads and railways and destroyed buildings in places such as Jablanica, Kiseljak, Kreševo, Fojnica, and Vareš. Over 20 people lost their lives, many more their livelihoods.

Amid this crisis, we must not overlook the mental toll that these traumatic events have on those affected, not just the flood victims but also the medical workers, rescuers, firefighters, and civil protection teams who are on the front lines of the response. They are working day and night under immense pressure, helping others, even when personally

impacted. The emotional weight of these events can lead to profound psychological effects, including post-traumatic stress disorder and other long-term mental health challenges.

Read Op-Ed here: <https://bit.ly/4fh8xIK>.

HEALTH IS A PRESSING ISSUE – EVERYWHERE.



WHO/Europe Regional Director Dr Hans Kluge elevated health to the highest political level with heads of state and government at the Berlin Process Summit 2024 (14 October 2024, Berlin, Germany), reflecting WHO EURO's support in strengthening health in the Western Balkans. Marking the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Process, the summit adopted the Chair's conclusions, welcoming agreements such as the Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025-2028 and the Agreement on Access to Higher Education.

Health is pressing because evidence from the Western Balkans shows that it is among the top 10 sectors contributing to the economy – including for productivity and job generation. Health is simply a smart investment.

- ✓ It is pressing because health is the engine to drive more urgent action on #ClimateChange and the greening of economies.
- ✓ It is pressing because health - including equitable access to countermeasures and medicines - is a matter of national security.
- ✓ It is for these reasons that cooperation and access of the Western Balkans to EU financial and operational instruments and health decision-making processes, is in all of our interests.

Read the conclusions here: [2024-10-14-chairs-conclusion-westbalkangipfel-data.pdf](https://bit.ly/2024-10-14-chairs-conclusion-westbalkangipfel-data.pdf)

PARLIAMENTARIANS UNITE IN BERLIN TO SIGN GLOBAL STATEMENT SUPPORTING THE WHO PANDEMIC AGREEMENT



Parliamentarians from across the globe gathered at the UNITE Global Summit in Berlin to sign a statement in support of the World Health Organization Pandemic Agreement. The statement, signed by the President of UNITE, members of its board, and parliamentarians around the world, marks a significant commitment from parliamentarians to strengthen pandemic preparedness, response, and equitable access to health.

“Parliamentarians are the voice of the people and have a crucial responsibility in safeguarding public health,” said Ricardo Baptista Leite, President of UNITE. *“The WHO Pandemic Agreement represents a historic opportunity to*

prevent pandemics and strengthen our global preparedness and response capabilities. By signing this statement, we are not only showing our support for the agreement but also pledging to ensure that its principles of equity, solidarity, and global cooperation are fully realized in every nation.”

The UNITE Global Summit, this year held in collaboration with the World Health Summit, is a high level gathering with a unique convergence of global parliamentarians, civil society leaders, and health experts. The summit aims to translate discussions into actionable policy priorities. It focuses on critical health challenges under four main pillars: Human Rights & Equitable Access to Health, Global Health Architecture & Security, Strengthening of Healthcare Systems, and Sustainable Financing for Health. The signing of the Global Parliamentary Statement in Support of the Pandemic Agreement is one of the summit’s key highlights, demonstrating the critical role of parliamentarians in ensuring global health security and safeguarding populations against future pandemics.

Read here the full news release: [Parliamentarians unite in Berlin to sign global statement supporting the WHO Pandemic Agreement](#)

WORLD POLIO DAY



World Polio Day (24 October) highlights the importance of polio vaccination and global eradication efforts. WHO EURO has been polio-free since 2002, with continued high immunization coverage crucial to maintaining this status. However, on 23 October 2024, due to the escalating violence, intense

bombardment, mass displacement orders, and lack of assured humanitarian pauses across most of northern Gaza, the Polio Technical Committee for Gaza, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and partners have been compelled to postpone the third phase of the polio vaccination campaign. This final phase of the ongoing campaign aimed to vaccinate 119 279 children across northern Gaza.

The current conditions, including ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure continue to jeopardize people’s safety and movement in northern Gaza, making it impossible for families to safely bring their children for vaccination, and health workers to operate.

Read more: [Intense bombardments, mass displacements and lack of access in northern Gaza force the postponement of polio vaccination campaign](#)

FLU AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



The Flu Awareness Campaign is marked every year in October. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination for people’s health and well-being and to increase the uptake of seasonal influenza vaccination of people with underlying risk factors.

Influenza is usually mild and most people recover quickly, but some people are at high risk of serious complications, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

The elderly, pregnant women, young children and people with underlying health conditions are more likely than others to develop severe disease following infection. In addition, health care workers are more exposed to different viruses on a daily basis, including the influenza virus, and should be vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients.

Influenza is a disease with high social and economic costs, and vaccination is the best way to prevent the disease. As influenza viruses change, vaccination against influenza is needed every year to keep up with the circulating viruses. In the northern hemisphere, the seasonal influenza circulation is observed between November up to May, so October is the optimal time to receive an influenza vaccination.

For more about the campaign is available click here: [Flu Awareness Campaign 2024](#)

BETTER USE OF VACCINES COULD REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC USE BY 2.5 BILLION DOSES ANNUALLY, SAYS WHO



A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) finds that vaccines against 23 pathogens (excluding gonorrhoea) could reduce the number of antibiotics needed by 22% or 2.5 billion defined daily doses globally every year, supporting worldwide efforts to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR). While some of these vaccines are already available but underused, others would need to be developed and brought to the market as soon as possible.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, making people sicker and increasing the risk of illness, death and the spread of infections that are difficult to treat. AMR is driven largely by the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials, yet, at the same time, many people around the world do not have access to essential antimicrobials. Each year, nearly 5 million deaths are associated with AMR globally.

The new report expands on a [WHO study](#) published in BMJ Global Health last year. It estimates that vaccines already in use against pneumococcus pneumonia, *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (HiB, a bacteria causing pneumonia and meningitis) and typhoid could avert up to 106 000 of the deaths associated with AMR each year. An additional 543 000 deaths associated with AMR could be averted annually when new vaccines for tuberculosis (TB) and pneumonia due to *Klebsiella pneumoniae* infection, are developed and rolled out globally. While new TB vaccines are in clinical trials, one against *Klebsiella pneumoniae* is in early stage of development.

Read the full story here: [Better use of vaccines could reduce antibiotic use by 2.5 billion doses annually, says WHO](#)

WHO ADDS AN HPV VACCINE FOR SINGLE-DOSE USE



WHO announced that a fourth WHO-prequalified human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine product, Cecolin®, has been confirmed for use in a single-dose schedule. The decision is made based on new data on the product that fulfilled the criteria set out in the WHO's 2022 recommendations for alternative, off-label use of HPV vaccines in single-dose schedules. This important milestone will contribute to improving sustainable supply of HPV vaccines—allowing more girls to

be reached with the vaccines that prevent cervical cancer.

“Unlike most other cancers, we have the ability to eliminate cervical cancer, along with its painful inequities,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *“By adding another option for a one-dose HPV vaccination schedule, we have taken another step closer to consigning cervical cancer to history.”*

More than 95% of the 660 000 cervical cancer cases occurring globally each year are caused by HPV. *“Having 90% of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by 15 years of age is the target for the first pillar of the WHO [Global strategy for cervical cancer elimination](#),”* said Dr Kate O'Brien, Director of the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at WHO. *“Given the continuing supply challenges, this addition of single-dose vaccine product means countries will have greater choice of vaccines to reach more girls.”*

Read the full story here: [WHO adds an HPV vaccine for single-dose use](#)

WHO EMERGENCIES

Health emergencies list

The health emergencies list details the disease outbreaks, disasters and humanitarian crises where WHO plays an essential role in supporting countries to respond to and recover from emergencies with public health consequences.

[Mpox EURO \(who.int\)](#)

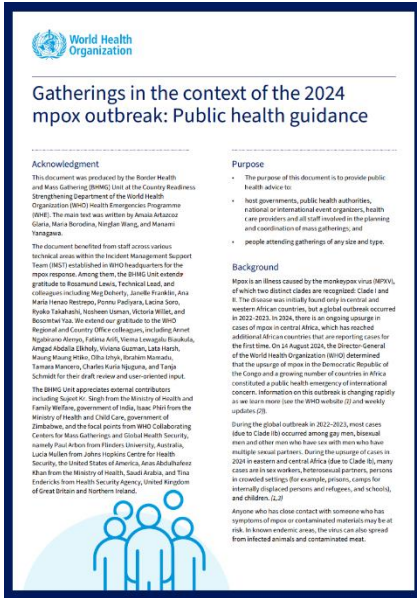
[Ukraine emergency \(who.int\)](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(who.int\)](#)

[Conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory \(who.int\)](#)

WHO PUBLICATION

Gatherings in the context of the 2024 mpox outbreak: public health guidance



Mpox is an illness caused by the monkeypox virus, of which two distinct clades are recognized: Clade I and II. The disease was initially found only in central and western African countries, but a global outbreak occurred in 2022–2023. In 2024, there is an ongoing upsurge in cases of mpox in central Africa, which has reached additional African countries that are reporting cases for the first time. On 14 August 2024, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a growing number of countries in Africa constituted a public health emergency of international concern. Information on this outbreak is changing rapidly as we learn more (see the WHO website (1) and weekly updates (2))

The purpose of this document is to provide public health advice to:

- host governments, public health authorities, national or international event organizers, health providers and all staff involved in the planning and coordination

of mass gatherings; and

- people attending gatherings of any size and type.

Read more: [Gatherings in the context of the 2024 mpox outbreak: public health guidance](#)

WHO EVENTS & COURSES

Preventing a triple threat this autumn and winter: applying lessons and understanding individual risk to protect ourselves and others from respiratory illness; 9 October 2024-31 March 2025

Every year, WHO/Europe calls on individuals, communities and governments to protect their most vulnerable during autumn and winter. Since the onset of COVID-19, our populations have been exposed to a triple threat of three main co-circulating viruses: COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus.

Click here for more: <https://www.who.int/europe/event/preventing-a-triple-threat-this-autumn-and-winter--applying-lessons-and-understanding-individual-risk-to-protect-ourselves-and-others-from-respiratory-illness>

WATCH

In an **interview on BHT1** on 21 October 2024, WHO Special Representative in BiH Erwin Cooreman discussed the humanitarian crises in Gaza and Lebanon, and severe health risks and challenges faced by health personnel. He also highlighted WHO’s contributions and addressed questions on COVID-19 and the Pact for the Future.

Watch the full interview here: [Gost BHT1 Uživo bio je Erwin Cooreman, specijalni predstavnik SZO-a u BiH - YouTube](#)

Follow our YouTube channel for more engaging content: [\(World Health Organization \(WHO\) - YouTube](#)

WHO PODCAST

The Global Health Matters podcast, hosted by Dr Garry Aslanyan:

Episode 40: Pockets of optimism: Empowering youth to improve mental health

UNICEF estimates that 13% of adolescents live with a diagnosed mental health disorder, with depression and anxiety accounting for 40%. To explore the challenges surrounding the mental health of today's youth, host Garry Aslanyan speaks with Jaime Young, a passionate youth leader, mental health advocate and family caseworker at the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund, and Zeinab Hijazi, a clinical psychologist and Global Lead on Mental Health at UNICEF. Together, they discuss how resilience can be cultivated and share inspiring examples of young people around the world developing solutions for mental health for their peers.

Listen here: [Pockets of optimism: empowering youth to improve mental health](#)

SOURCES

- <https://www.who.int/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/whoregionalofficeforeurope>

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