



## HIGHLIGHTS

- PSTF Members Meet Provincial Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
  - PEOC held Consultative Meeting with PSTF Members in Karachi
  - Secretary General Wafaq-ul-Madaris Pakistan Inaugurated Polio Campaign in Peshawar
  - PSTF Members and RSPs Urge Parents for Polio Vaccination
  - Meetings with Paish Imams and Ulema at Madaris
  - PSTF Members from Quetta ask Ulema to support Polio campaigns
  - PPA and PIMA Support Polio Campaigns in Karachi

## NATIONAL UPDATES

## PSTF Members Reaffirm President of Pakistan their Support on COVID-19 Activities



In an online meeting with the President of Pakistan, Dr Muhammad Arif Alvi, the Provincial Scholars Taskforce (PSTF) members have reaffirmed their support to the government in its efforts against COVID-19 pandemic across the country. President Alvi appreciated the role of Ulmea (religious scholars) in creating awareness among people during the first wave of the pandemic and urged for same amid the second wave of the contagion. PSTF members while reassuring the President, shared that they will keep playing their role in all the ongoing and planned actions of the government to defeat the pandemic and stand together with the nation as to achieve the 'one' goal of a polio and COVID-19 free Pakistan.

COVER STORY

# Islamic Advisory Group Lauds Pakistan's Efforts of Polio Eradication

The Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication has appreciated Pakistan's resolve and fight to end polio, reaffirming its support towards global polio eradication efforts with a special focus on Pakistan and Afghanistan.



In a statement released after the virtual conduction of 7th IAG meeting, the IAG urges religious leaders and influential community leaders in Afghanistan and Pakistan to continue fully supporting ongoing polio eradication efforts and mobilize parents and caregivers in their areas to regularly vaccinate their children against polio as well as other vaccine-preventable diseases.

While representing Pakistan at the IAG meeting, the National Coordinator for the polio programme,

Dr Rana Muhammad Safdar reaffirmed the strong commitment by the government of Pakistan, to end polio from the country and mentioned that all concrete efforts are being made in this regard.

Whilst reaffirming commitment to eradicate polio, the IAG praised Pakistan for its alignment with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Strategic Health Programme of Action and acknowledged the tremendous support during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



PROVINCIAL UPDATES: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

## PSTF Members Meet Provincial Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The Provincial Scholar Taskforce (PSTF) members from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have reaffirmed their support to the provincial government in efforts against COVID-19 pandemic and of polio eradication across the province. In their meeting with the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Peshawar, the PSTF

members shared that they were part of many activities being implemented from Provincial Emergency Operation Centre under Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme to create awareness among communities and religious leaders on the adoption of COVID-19 SOPs at religious and public places.



PROVINCIAL UPDATES: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

## Secretary General Wafaq-ul-Madaris Pakistan Inaugurated Polio Campaign in Peshawar



The Secretary General Wafaq-ul-Madaris Pakistan, Qari Muhammad Hanfi Jalandhir inaugurated a polio campaign in Peshawar. Vaccinating a child in a local madrasa he noted that "vaccinating children for polio and other diseases is in accordance with the Islamic Shariah and therefore all parents should vaccinate their children." He further maintained that Wafaq-ul-Madaris Pakistan will keep supporting efforts of the government for the national cause of polio eradication from the country.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: Sindh

## PEOC held Consultative Meeting with PSTF Members in Karachi

Provincial Scholars pledged their support to polio eradication activities



As part of World Polio Day commemorations, Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PEOC) in coordination with Rotary International, organized different activities including a consultative meeting with the Provincial Scholars Taskforce (PSTF) members on 22 October in Karachi. The objective of this consultative meeting was to share the key highlights of Pakistan polio Programme with the provincial scholars, and to ask for their support in order to

cope with the prevailing challenges in the Super High Risk Union Councils (SHRCs) of Karachi. Based on this consultation and follow up coordination, the PSTF members participated in various community engagement activities. Calling it a "national obligation" the PSTF members provided support in creating awareness amongst religious leaders, parents and communities on polio vaccination during the October and November campaigns.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

## PSTF Members and RSPs Urge Parents on Media, for Polio Vaccination



As part of campaigning and awareness raising activities, the PSTF members and RSPs endorsed the polio campaigns through various media channels across the country. In a number of video messages, as broadcast on local cable networks and social media, the religious leaders urged the parents and communities to vaccinate their children during October and November.

campaigns. The PSTF members from Lakkhi Marwat, Mardan, Peshawar and South Waziristan, specially appeared on TV talk shows and participated in radio programmes to advocate for polio vaccination.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: **Sindh**

## Meetings with Paish Imams and Ulema at Madaris



For the October and November polio campaigns, the Ulema of well-known Madaris including Jamia Tul Uloom UI Islamia/ Binori Town, Jamia Daruloom, Jamia Naeemia, Dawat-E-Islami (Faizan-E-Madina), Jamia Sattaria Islamia, Jamia Binoria and others were approached to seek support for the polio programme. The PSTF members urged the Ulema to play their crucial role in sensitising parents and communities to vaccinate their children against polio and other diseases. The Paish Imams and Khateebas reassured their full support in convincing people to cooperate with polio teams and vaccinating their children.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: **Balochistan**

## PSTF Members from Quetta ask Ulema to Support Polio Campaigns

As part of advocacy and lobbying activities, the PSTF members from Quetta Block held meetings with Ulema (religious leaders) in Quetta, Pishin and Killa Abdullah. The main purpose of their meetings was to achieve the support of the anti-polio Ulema in these districts for NIDs January, 2021 campaign. During the meeting, the PSTF members also invited the Ulema in a provincial seminar on polio eradication.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: **Sindh | Balochistan | Punjab | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

## Awareness Raising through Friday Sermons and Mosque Announcements

Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme has also engaged local Religious Support Persons (RSPs) in liaising with Paish Imams (local clerics) to seek their support in raising awareness on polio vaccination during the Friday Sermons.



For every immunization campaign, the Paish Imams highlight the importance of polio vaccination during the Friday sermons. It has proved very beneficial in convincing hardcore communities and parents to vaccinate their children during the campaigns. The initiative has also contributed towards less number of recorded refusals as converging the religious refusal to acceptance in SHRUCs and other remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. During October and November campaigns. The RSPs also made mosque announcements to inform the local communities and parents about the schedule of campaigns in their areas.

PROVINCIAL UPDATES: **Sindh**

## PPA and PIMA Support Polio Campaigns in Karachi



Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA) and Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) supported polio campaign activities during October and November Campaigns in Karachi. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has also been signed between EOC Sindh and the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) in Karachi on 23rd October 2020. Under this MOU, the doctors from PIMA are supporting Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme while the PPA doctors have also been engaged in awareness raising

activities among parents and communities to vaccinate their children against polio and other diseases. Besides their support in community engagement, the PPA and PIMA doctors have also participated in various media discussions and programmes to advocate for polio and immunisation activities. PIMA has also assured to provide venue support for establishing polio desks and vaccination points at their clinics and hospitals.

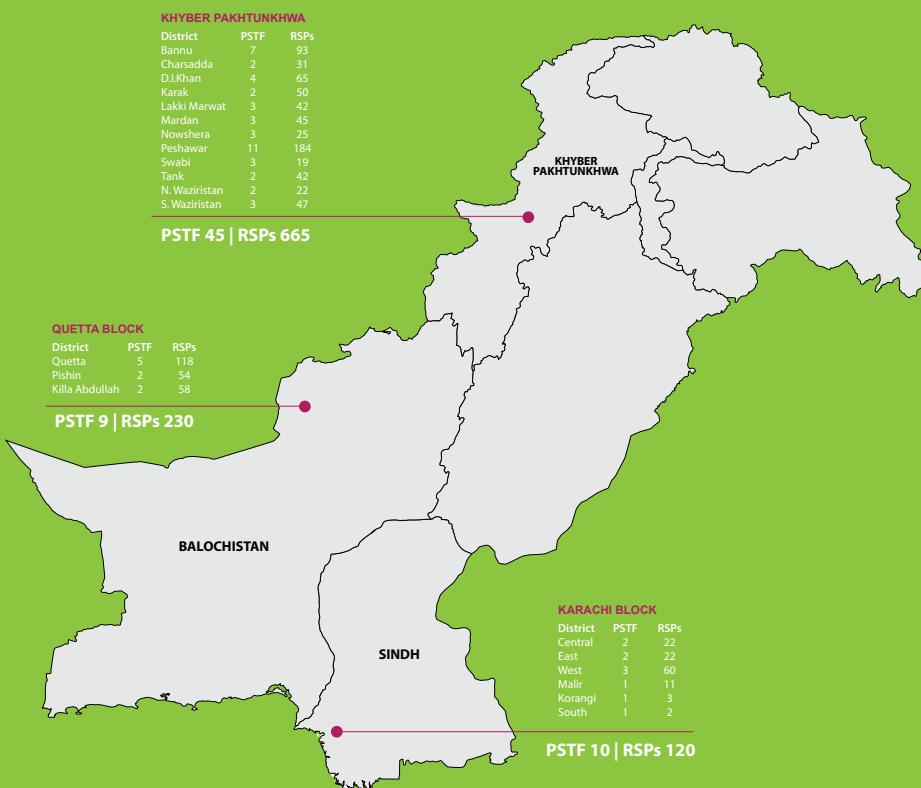
# What is Religious Leaders Initiative?

National Islamic Advisory Group (NIAG) was established in the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in 2013 to address the misconceptions related to vaccine, especially polio, and other vaccines. NIAG comprises of religious scholars from all schools of thought and technical experts of fiqh and Shria.

Subsequently, Provincial Scholars Taskforce (PSTF) was established in October 2014 on the recommendation of NIAG to remove any misperceptions and to promote the acceptance of polio vaccination and routine immunization at provincial level.

Considering the recommendations of the NIAG and Provincial Scholars Taskforce, the Religious Support Persons (RSPs) initiative was launched in November 2014. The initiative strives to engage local religious leaders and scholars of the country to exercise their influence over the community, to address the negative perception about the polio vaccine and all vaccine preventable diseases, and to convince parents to protect their children and give them the right to be vaccinated against all curable diseases through an effective immunization programme.

**70\*** Provincial Scholars, **1010\*** Religious Support Persons in **561\*** UCs, **58\*** Tehsils/town in **23\*** districts in **04** high risk epidemiological blocks of Pakistan



## PAKISTAN POLIO ERADICATION PROGRAMME

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EPI Building, Block-D,  
Prime Minister's Health Complex, Chak Shahzad,  
44000, Islamabad

Helpline: 1166

URL: [www.endpolio.com.pk](http://www.endpolio.com.pk)