

**Republic of Chad  
State Office  
Ministry of Public Health**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Statement from the Government  
-Gouro-Chad-**

## **2<sup>ND</sup> STATEMENT**

The independent international experts in charge of the in-depth investigation into the unusual reactions recorded during the vaccination campaign against meningitis between 11 and 15 December 2012 at Gouro (West-Ennedi), presented their preliminary findings on Friday 18 January 2013 at SEM. Their investigation was based on four (4) axes:

- Analysis of available documents;
- Analysis of the organization of the vaccination campaign and vaccine quality;
- Interviews of the different parties involved;
- Medical examination of the 36 cases in the two hospitals in N'Djamena.

As a result from the different analyses, discussions among the team, and after meetings or contacting those implicated (or not implicated), in the event, the experts have come to the preliminary conclusions below:

### **EXPERT FINDINGS**

The vaccination campaign organized in Gouro was conducted under normal conditions by staffs who are experienced in implementing mass campaigns and routine vaccination programs.

The conditions of hospitalization, in particular the medical care at the psychological level, the dialogue between the community and the health staff, were insufficient.

The crises are triggered by noise, visits by foreigners, and the occurrence of crises among other patients. Apart from these agitated periods, the children lead normal lives.

The patients are aged between 8 and 25 years, and with 77% of them being girls, i.e. 27 out of a total of 35.

A child that had not been vaccinated complains of similar symptoms.

All the different medical examinations performed on the patients were normal. The neurological examination on patients at the request of the experts also concluded that all was normal.

The same MenAfriVac vaccine lot 127M1033, used in Gouro, was used in the entire Ennedi region.

The expert reports from WHO on the vaccine lot at the level of the manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII), showed no manufacturing defect.

The MenAfriVac vaccine, prequalified by WHO in 2010, has been subjected to all the required tests before being used. To date, more than 100 million people have been vaccinated in 10 countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, Senegal, Chad, and Benin). The vaccine will be further introduced in 16 African countries. Since the introduction of the vaccine, no case of meningitis "A" has been recorded in vaccinated individuals.

## EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure the progressive but rapid return of the children to their families and a medical follow-up;
- Maintain a dialogue with the families, and vaccination stakeholders and partners.
- Reinforce the medical structure at the local level through the addition of a doctor and a qualified nurse for a better health follow up in the populations and routine immunization activities.
- Reinforce the ability of the health staff in crisis communication and the management of rumors.

The experts wish to specifically state that analysis of the epidemiological, medical, clinical, and diagnostic tests data, has not been able to establish a causal link between the clinical manifestations observed in the patients and the MenAfriVac vaccine.

The symptoms observed in patients are similar to those described in the literature under several names:

- Collective hysteria
- Collective obsessive behavior
- Mass psychogenic phenomenon

The independent experts thank the population and the authorities in Chad for their confidence. They request that the authorities be diligent in the implementation of the recommendations that will facilitate a return to a peaceful situation that will be to the benefit of the vaccination programs.

The full preliminary report has been submitted to the governmental authorities and will be finalized by the Health Service in Tunisia, where 7 of the 35 patients from N'Djamena were evacuated.

The Ministry of Public Health has worked in collaboration with the experts whilst guaranteeing the complete independence of the investigation. The Ministry welcomes the experts' conclusions in reassuring the patients, their families, and the general public of the health status of the evacuated patients from Gouro, the quality of the MenAfriVac vaccine and the overall importance of vaccination.

N'Djamena, 21 January 2013

The Minister of Public Health

Dr Mamouth Nahor N'Gawara