



25. April 2014 – An increasing number of countries have set out national goals to eliminate malaria, but the number of estimated cases of malaria in 2012 was still high - 207 million, according to the annual report on malaria. 627.000 people died of malaria the same year, most of them children in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Africa, a child still dies every minute from malaria. That means 60 children an hour, 1,440 a day, 10,080 a week.

As we observe World Malaria Day, we focus on helping countries move towards the eradication of malaria. It is not a utopia, but a reachable goal. The good news is that global efforts to control and eliminate malaria have saved an estimated 3.3 million lives since 2000, reducing malaria mortality rates by 42% globally and 49% in Africa.

Malaria is a preventable and curable vector-borne disease, which is caused by parasites. The disease is transmitted to people through the bites of infected mosquitoes. Partial immunity towards malaria can be developed over years of exposure, and although never providing complete protection, it reduces the risk of severe disease. This is why most malaria deaths in Africa occur among young children instead of adults.

Malaria, however, is not only Africa's problem. Approximately half of the world's population is at risk of contracting the disease, since malaria occurs also in Asia, Latin America, and, to a lesser

extent, in the Middle East and parts of Europe. In 2013, 97 countries and territories had ongoing malaria transmission.

On the occasion of the World Malaria Day, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon states “I applaud the many committed partners whose concerted efforts have saved well over 3 million lives since 2000. The global malaria mortality rate has been reduced by more than 40 per cent and many countries have successfully moved closer to eliminating the disease.” The Roll Back Malaria campaign “Invest in the future: defeat malaria” aims at strengthening political will across the world and contributing to increase the funding needed to control malaria in endemic countries.

However, half a million people are still dying from malaria every year, too many cases still go untested, unregistered and untreated. Therefore, continued investment and sustained political commitment is crucial in order to defeat the disease once and for all.

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UNRIC's article on [vector-borne diseases](#)

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