

MALARIA 101

PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

JULY 2024

Malaria is one of the world's oldest and deadliest diseases, one that still **kills a child every minute**.¹

While progress has been made – the global death rate halved between 2000 and 2015,² and case incidence fell by 26%³ – the fight is far from over. According to the World Malaria Report 2023, over 40% of countries were still malaria endemic in 2022. A lot of work is still needed to tackle this disease and end it for good – but with the right political leadership and funding, we can end malaria in our lifetimes.

British science is at the cutting edge of ending malaria, and the tools which will end malaria are being developed all around the UK, from next-generation insecticide-treated nets developed in Liverpool to digital diagnostic tests researched in London. This work includes the recent development of vaccines, adding exciting new tools to our arsenal in the fight against malaria. Alongside this work, Britain is also a leading donor in efforts to tackle malaria and must continue to play its role by fully funding Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund) in their current and upcoming investment opportunities.

The fight against malaria is at a precarious juncture – **now is the time to finish the job**.

KEY STATISTICS

- There were 249 million cases and 608,000 deaths from malaria in 2022. Five countries particularly saw a significant increase in case incidence, including Pakistan, which saw a five-fold increase after the intense flooding, as well as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, and Uganda.
- Globally 76% of deaths from malaria are in children under the age of five. On average, a child under five dies every minute from malaria. In 2022, it was the most common cause of death for children aged 5-14 living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹ UNICEF, "Malaria," UNICEF Data, accessed June 26, 2024, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/malaria/>

² World Health Organization. (2015). World Malaria Report 2015. Retrieved from https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/200018/9789241565158_eng.pdf?sequence=1

³ World Health Organization. (2023). World Malaria Report 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/teams/globalmalaria-programme/reports/world-malariareport-2023>

- The WHO African Region carries a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden. In 2022, the region was home to 94% of malaria cases and 95% of malaria deaths.
- Between 2000 and 2015 the mortality rate fell by 50% and has remained at similar levels since.
- Since 2000, the percentage of households with at least one insecticide-treated net has increased from 5% to 70%. In 2022, approximately 282 million nets were delivered to malaria-endemic countries.

THE BENEFITS OF TACKLING MALARIA

From the innovative work of British and British-backed scientists through to the role we played in founding the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in 2002 Britain has long been at the forefront in the fight against malaria.

Alongside our allies, the UK's effort has played a significant role in helping to cut the death rate from malaria in half over the past two decades. However, in recent years there has been a stalling in progress, due to factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increased drug and insecticide resistance, and a challenging economic outlook.

We know that the 2030 goal to end the malaria epidemic is still achievable. But it will require a renewed commitment from nations – including the UK. Such a commitment will not only help save hundreds of thousands of lives but will also benefit Britain and for the world more broadly. The benefits include:

- **Greater health security, both at home and abroad:** Malaria is a global issue with a global impact. It can obscure the risk posed by emerging diseases and it drains much-needed resources from combatting issues such as climate change. Without stronger health systems, global health security is at risk – including the health security of the UK. Tackling malaria allows us to be better prepared for future threats and must be factored in as an important part of climate resilient health systems and infrastructure. By ending malaria for good now, we can **build a safer world** and be better prepared for new threats.
- **Improved global economic prosperity and increased trade prospects:** The costs of controlling malaria pose a significant economic burden that weighs heavily on endemic countries. For households experiencing poverty, often most at risk, malaria costs can take away up to one-third of their income. Tackling malaria could alleviate this economic burden for countries and individuals, providing greater prosperity for all. Our recent report shows that by meeting the Sustainable Development Goals target for malaria, we may expect to see a \$142.7 billion boost to the GDP of all malaria-endemic countries. We may further expect a boost to international trade of \$80.7 billion, with the UK's exports to key African countries increasing by \$453

million.⁴ As Britain looks to improve its economic and trading links with countries globally, it will be missing out on import and export opportunities due to the malaria burden faced by trade partners. By working to end malaria, the UK would not only be reducing the global health burden, but also be unlocking important trade potential and **improving global prosperity**.

- **Stronger relationships with allies around the world:** Britain has long played a leading role on the world stage, and the recent success of international events held in Britain, such as COP26, has shown the ongoing potential of Global Britain. By championing the fight against this debilitating disease, the UK can demonstrate its commitment to strengthening international relationships and tackle a major global threat. These strengthened relationships enable the UK to continue shaping policies on a range of global challenges, which directly and indirectly impact the lives of British people. By being reliable partners in the pursuit of eradicating malaria, the UK can **enhance its global standing** whilst also advancing the cause of sustainable health equity.
- **Investment and support for British science:** The fight against malaria is one that constantly shifts and evolves meaning we need constant innovation, investment in research and development for new malaria tools, and robust, well-funded delivery mechanisms to get the required tools to threatened communities. Some of the most important tools we have in this fight have come out of Britain, from next-generation insecticide-treated nets developed in Liverpool to rapid diagnostic tests researched in London, and the malaria vaccines that will be key to the fight going forward. The expertise that has been built-up in Britain will be critical to future innovation and developments, and the UK Government must continue to support these institutions to train up the next generation of scientists, ensuring this work can continue.

WHAT THE UK CAN DO

The next UK parliament needs to ensure the world gets back on track for eradicating malaria within our lifetimes – and recognise the wider benefits of doing so such as trade and health security. For us to succeed, the UK needs to:

- **Ensure full funding for Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance:** The UK Government must commit to fully financing Gavi, which is essential in the battle against malaria. Their efforts must be fully supported to ensure effective control and immunisation reach those most in need.
- **Ensure full funding for The Global Fund to combat HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria:** This funding is critical to sustaining and scaling up efforts to prevent and

⁴ Malaria No More UK. (2024). *Britain's Golden Opportunity*. Available at: <https://malarianomore.org.uk/sites/default/files/Britains%20Golden%20Opportunity%20-%20ONLINE.pdf>

treat these diseases, ultimately saving millions of lives and strengthening health systems in vulnerable regions. The Global Fund's arsenal of tools, including next-generation bed nets, will in combination with vaccines primarily funded by Gavi ensure the most effective outcomes in tackling malaria.

- **Provide comprehensive funding to Product Development Partnerships through multi-year agreements:** Investing in these partnerships, such as with the Medicines for Malaria Venture and the Innovative Vector Control Consortium, goes beyond financial support; it fosters international collaboration, shares scientific expertise, and drives innovation to combat malaria globally.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

In parliament, there are lots of ways you can support the fight against malaria. This includes:

- Join the APPG for Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, a parliamentary group that aims to build cross-party support for the fight against these diseases. For further details, visit their website [here](#).
- Ask questions, sign early-day motions, and speak up in debates to ensure the fight against malaria is on the Government's agenda and that work is being done to get the world back on track to achieve the 2030 goal of ending the malaria epidemic.
- Raise public awareness for the fight against malaria by signing onto op-eds and sharing updates on the fight against malaria on social media.
- Attend a Zero Malaria Britain street stall in your constituency. We would be happy to arrange this with your team, engage local media, and capture content that you can use.
- Support our campaigns on social media, including our [#FinishTheJob](#) campaign helping us to raise awareness of the role British Science is playing in the fight against malaria and encourage further action.
- Meet with us to discuss the fight against malaria, and the different ways we can make significant progress throughout the next parliament.

We look forward to working with you in the future to achieve our goals of eliminating malaria.

To find out more about our work, please visit our parliamentary hub [here](#), or find us on X [here](#).

For more information, or to arrange a meeting to discuss this briefing or any of the issues raised please contact UK Advocacy Officer for Malaria No More UK, Mark Joselin (mark.joselin@malarianomore.org.uk).