

Emergency Management of the Rabies Incursion in West Timor, Indonesia

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Situation Update

Rabies has been documented in Indonesia since the late 1800s, and since then, it has spread to nearly three-quarters of the country's provinces, even as a nation made up of thousands of archipelagos with some extremely remote islands.

Over the last decade, the Indonesian government, together with other stakeholders, has implemented rabies control and elimination activities in several priority areas. However, in the last three years, the activities were limited due to several obstacles, including the COVID19 pandemic. As a result, several areas saw a significant increase in rabies cases. Recently, rabies re-emerged on Timor Island in 2023, when the last reported rabies case was reported more than a century ago.

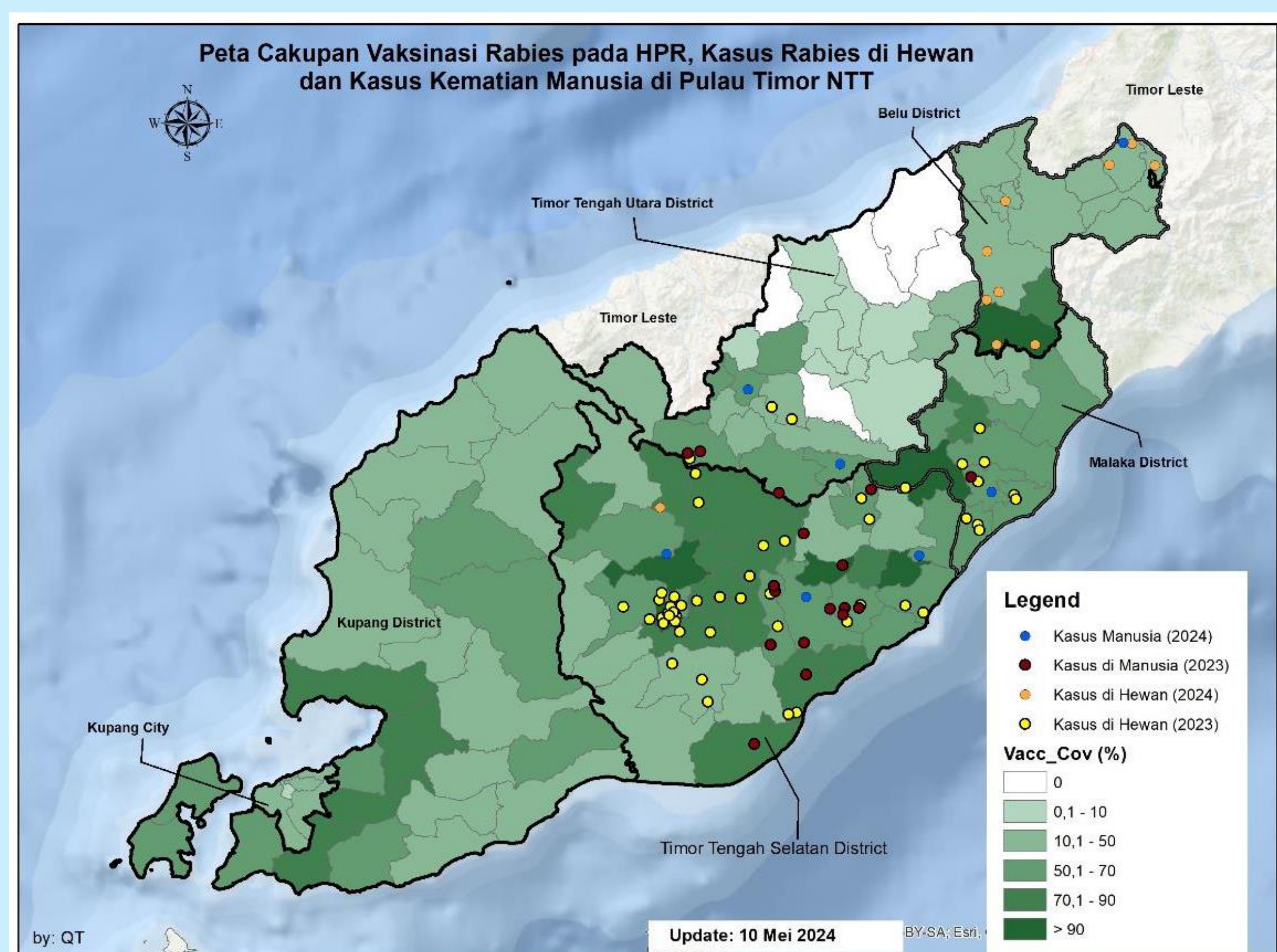


Map of rabies situation each Indonesian Province

Government's Response

What is the rabies response?	Who?	Where?	
Implementing non-natural disaster regulation	MoA, FAO, BNPB, NTT Governor, Mayors	West Timor area	
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IBCM • Dog vaccination • Disease detection and response • Risk communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoH, MoA, WHO, AIHSP • AIHSP, MoA • AIHSP, MoA • AIHSP, MoA 	West Timor area
Dog population estimates	Sydney University	TTS district	
Rabies epidemiology and economic modelling	APCAH, Nossal Institute	West Timor area	
Rabies vaccination provision	MoA, WOA, BNPB	West Timor area	
Implementing dog vaccination programme	Local government	Affected areas in West Timor	
Implementing integrated bite case management	Local government	Affected areas in West Timor	
Strengthening rabies surveillance	Local government	Affected areas in West Timor	
Logistic application to monitor human vaccine and RIG in real-time			
Carrying out rabies public awareness	Local government	Affected areas in West Timor	

The progress of rabies control efforts



The initial response to the rabies outbreak in Indonesia's Timor took place in the South Central Timor (TTS) district, the site of the first reported case. Various challenges, both technical and non-technical, hindered the timely implementation of the dog vaccination program. A number of 140,000 and 158,000 dogs were vaccinated in 2023 and 2024, respectively, out of the estimated dog population of more than 258,000. This means that the vaccination coverage was not sufficient to contain the spread of the rabies virus to other areas. Throughout 2023, there were 17 rabies-related deaths, while as of April 2024, 7 people have died in all districts in West Timor because of rabies.

Data	2023	2024*)
Dog vaccination	140,403	158,664
Animal bite cases	3,961	2,170
Animal cases	170	16
Human cases	17	7

*) April

Challenges/gaps

- Limited budget for rabies vaccine procurement.
- Limited budget for dog vaccination operational costs as well as challenges in the reimbursement procedure of the operational costs
- Lack of resources for maintaining and monitoring dog vaccination programme
- Low health-seeking behaviour
- Decentralization of government structure makes coordination complicated

Way forward

- Strengthening the dog vaccination programme to reach targeted coverage
- Strengthening IBCM implementation in all districts
- Increasing community involvement and empowerment through the zoonoses cadre and education agencies
- Utilizing extraordinary funding resources to strengthen the rabies control and elimination programme: village fund, emergency fund