

RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON THE 16 JULY 2025

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## DISCLAIMER

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE

### ZIMBABWE- INFORMATION ON AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HIV/AIDS TREATMENT; ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY OF ANTIRETROVIRALS

*The Chronicle* in July 2025 notes that: “GOVERNMENT has taken proactive steps to ensure continuity of HIV treatment for thousands of Zimbabweans dependent on life-saving medication, with the procurement of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs for early next year already underway to avert potential shortages. This comes on the back of reduced external funding, particularly from the United States Government. Health and Child Care Minister Dr Douglas Mombeshora said Zimbabwe had adequate ARV stocks to last until the end of December this year and has already started planning for the next phase of procurement to prevent any supply gaps in the first half of next year. 'We had stocks from the beginning of the year, which were lasting up to the end of June, and when the Trump executive order came into effect, we took steps as Government to make sure that we cover the gap. We made orders using two companies to provide more ARVs. 'Those stocks are now in place to cover us up to the end of the year. We can assure the nation that we have got enough stocks of ARVs up to December.’”<sup>1</sup>

This document further mentioned that: “Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV treatment coverage rates in sub-Saharan Africa, with more than 1,3 million people on antiretroviral therapy.”<sup>2</sup>

In June 2025 the *New Zimbabwe* reported that: “By Anna Chibamu STIGMA and discrimination remain the most damaging barriers to the country's national HIV response, Health and Child Care Minister Douglas Mombeshora has said. Addressing journalists at a Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) breakfast meeting in Harare this Thursday, Mombeshora said stigma discouraged vital actions meant to reduce the spread and treatment of HIV. The stigma index 2.0 has risen to 69.7% from 65% between 2018 and 2023. Stigma and discrimination remain among the most damaging barriers to Zimbabwe's national HIV response.”<sup>3</sup>

This document further states that: “3 million Zimbabweans living with HIV and over 96% are accessing life-saving antiretroviral therapy. We have reached the UNA's 95-95-95 targets ahead of

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<sup>1</sup> The Chronicle (1 July 2025) Government assures ARVs availability

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> New Zimbabwe (26 June 2025) Stigma, discrimination remain the most damaging barriers to Zimbabwe's HIV response Health Minister

schedule, a milestone reflecting our strong infrastructure, committed healthcare workers and effective multi-sector collaboration. "The country's gains on HIV remain fragile, according to Mombeshora. Our gains remain fragile. Between January and June this year, Zimbabwe recorded 5,932 AIDS-related deaths compared to 5,712 in the same period in 2024, an increase of 220 deaths. Reminding us, our work is still not done. This rise is not due to partial withdrawal of partner support. By the time key partners like the US government withdrew some funding, our institutions had adequate ARR fees and supplies."<sup>4</sup>

An article published by *Frontiers* in May 2025 points out that: "Zimbabwe has made commendable progress in controlling its HIV epidemic. New infections have dropped substantially over the past decade, and the country has reached key health milestones in its HIV response (10,11). Through effective prevention programs, widespread access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), and significant international support, Zimbabwe has moved from crisis management to a more stable and controlled epidemic. According to UNAIDS, Zimbabwe surpassed the 95-95-95 targets in 2023 (12). Despite these successes, Zimbabwe now faces a critical turning point in redefining HIV care, with a focus on sustainability beyond the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets."<sup>5</sup>

The *World Health Organization* in December 2024 reported that: "Susan Katsande has been living with HIV since 2002. Throughout her journey, she has maintained a sense of hope, noting that her experience has not been marked by significant challenges, as access to treatment and related services has always been available to her. However, she acknowledges that stigma and discrimination remain persistent, particularly when traveling to certain countries. While treatment is accessible for many, she also points out that remote communities still face barriers to care, including long distances, lower education levels, and difficulties with treatment adherence. On 1 December, Zimbabwe joined the global community in commemorating World AIDS Day. This year's observance comes at a time when the country has made significant progress in reducing HIV prevalence and improving access to HIV services, particularly for adults. Zimbabwe has successfully achieved the 95-95-95 UNAIDS Fast-Track targets for adults, underscoring the country's ongoing commitment to tackling the HIV epidemic. These targets mean that 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of those diagnosed are receiving treatment, and 95% of those on treatment have achieved viral load suppression."<sup>6</sup>

*The Herald (Zimbabwe)* in November 2024 states that: "Addressing the media during a workshop on the country's response to HIV and related issues in the capital yesterday, National Aids Council (NAC) monitoring and evaluation director Mr Amon Mpofu said Zimbabweans living with HIV who stayed and worked in neighbouring countries had to come back home to access their treatment. "We discovered that most of our people who are taking ARVs are living across the border, and they have to come back to Zimbabwe to get ARVs. If you go to a South African hospital, you cannot be given ARVs because the regimens they are giving are different from the ones in Zimbabwe. Botswana has accepted giving ARVs to Zimbabweans but still, the regimen might be different. So our people end up using what we call omalayitsha who then come to Zimbabwe, collect ARVs, take them across the border, to be swallowed in South Africa," he said."<sup>7</sup>

The *UK Home Office* in July 2024 reported that: "The government had a national HIV and AIDS policy that prohibited discrimination against persons with HIV, and the law prohibited such discrimination in the private sector and within parastatals. Despite these provisions, societal discrimination against

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Frontiers* (16 May 2025) Towards a sustainable HIV response: strengthening Zimbabwe's domestic financing for HIV programs amid declining donor support

<sup>6</sup> *World Health Organization* (1 December 2024) Zimbabwe scores gains in HIV control

<sup>7</sup> *The Herald (Zimbabwe)* (5 November 2024) NAC calls for harmonisation of SADC HIV treatment regimens

persons with HIV remained a problem. Local NGOs reported persons with HIV faced discrimination in employment, health services, and education. Although there was an active information campaign to destigmatize HIV – organized by international and local NGOs, the Ministry of Health, and the National AIDS Council – ostracism and discrimination continued. In the 2015 Demographic Health Survey, 22 percent of women and 20 percent of men reported they held discriminatory attitudes towards persons with HIV.”<sup>8</sup>

The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* in June 2024 points out that: “CDC and partners collaborate with the MOHCC to expand ART to over 1.23 million Zimbabweans estimated to be living with HIV. Currently, 89 percent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Zimbabwe are receiving ART (PEPFAR program data 2021).”<sup>9</sup>

The *US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* in April 2024 notes that: “The government had a national HIV and AIDS policy that prohibited discrimination against persons with HIV, and the law prohibited such discrimination in the private sector and within parastatals. Despite these provisions, societal discrimination against persons with HIV remained a problem. Local NGOs reported persons with HIV faced discrimination in employment, health services, and education. Although there was an active information campaign to destigmatize HIV – organized by international and local NGOs, the Ministry of Health, and the National AIDS Council – ostracism and discrimination continued. In the 2015 Demographic Health Survey, 22 percent of women and 20 percent of men reported they held discriminatory attitudes towards persons with HIV.”<sup>10</sup>

*Voice of America* in March 2023 states that: “Zimbabwe is one of only five countries to have reached 2025 U.N. targets on fighting the virus, and HIV/AIDS rates have plunged - boosted by foreign aid including some \$1.7 billion in U.S. funding for ART access since 2006. In 1997, the country's rate of HIV/AIDS was 25% among people aged 15 to 49. Today, that figure is 11%, according to UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Botswana, Tanzania, Namibia and Eswatini have also met the so-called 95-95-95 goals. Under the targets, 95% of people living with the virus should know their status, with 95% of those diagnosed receiving antiretroviral treatment. Among them, 95% should show viral suppression”<sup>11</sup>

In March 2024 *UNICEF* points out that: “Zimbabwe has surpassed the 95:95:95 UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) targets: 95 per cent of people living with HIV know their status; over 95 per cent of these are on anti-retroviral therapy (ART); and 95 per cent on ART are virally suppressed”<sup>12</sup>

A report issued in March 2024 by *NewsDay Zimbabwe* states that: “Experts say HIV stigma and discrimination in Zimbabwe is a major challenge that prevents people from accessing HIV prevention, treatment and care services. People living with HIV in Zimbabwe often face social exclusion, denial of employment, housing, and education and even violence”<sup>13</sup>

In February 2024 *MENAFN - Business & Finance News* notes that: “In Zimbabwe, the current HIV prevalence rate among adults is about 13% . In 1997 it was at its peak at 29.3% . Nevertheless, Zimbabwe still has the sixth highest HIV rate in the world. Eswatini has the highest rate (19.58%) and

<sup>8</sup> UK Home Office (15 July 2024) Country Policy and Information Note - Zimbabwe: Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (July 2024), p.26

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (13 June 2024) HIV and TB Overview: Zimbabwe

<sup>10</sup> US Department of State (22 April 2024) 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe, p.26

<sup>11</sup> Voice of America (28 March 2024) Zimbabwe Makes Strides on HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ People, p.1

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF (7 March 2024) Zimbabwe Annual Report 2023, p.19

<sup>13</sup> NewsDay Zimbabwe (1 March 2024) Decriminalise drug abuse, HIV transmission: UN

South Africa ranks fourth (14.75%). Our research focused on mothers in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city, who had access to treatment.”<sup>14</sup>

In December 2023 *Radio France International* states that: “Zimbabwe is one of only five countries in Africa to have achieved ambitious United Nations targets on identifying and treating HIV infections”<sup>15</sup>

This document also states that: “Over the past ten years Zimbabwe recorded the highest decline in new HIV infections in east and southern Africa...99 percent of the 1.3 million people living with HIV in the country are now on anti-retroviral drugs”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> MENAFN - Business & Finance (2 February 2024) *HIV-Positive Parents In Zimbabwe Struggle To Manage Their Children's Education Study Shows How*

<sup>15</sup> Radio France International (17 December 2023) *Despite major strides, Zimbabwe faces battle to end HIV for all*

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