



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

South Africa - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 22 October 2015.

Information on the medical treatment for people with HIV.

A document released in October 2015 by the *Mail & Guardian* states:

“South Africa has made significant strides in HIV prevention and treatment in the past decade.” (Mail & Guardian (21 October 2015) *SA makes major strides in HIV treatment and prevention*)

This report also points out that:

“...there has been a momentous increase in access to treatment...” (ibid)

In October 2015 the *Sunday Times* states:

“South Africa's 2015 total healthcare budget was R136-billion, with R22-billion allocated directly towards HIV/Aids programmes. The country's antiretroviral budget makes up R14-billion of the total HIV/Aids budget, which goes towards the cost of drugs, laboratories and human resources. Dr Yogan Pillay, the deputy director-general of HIV, TB and women and child health at the Department of Health, said the cost of treating the virus has accumulated significantly since the start of the roll-out of antiretrovirals in 2004. "It increases each year because we put new patients on treatment each year," he said. The department has 3.1million patients on antiretroviral treatment - the largest number of people on treatment in the world. The price of antiretroviral treatment was marked down from R314 per patient to R89 per fixed-dose combination. This is a combination of several drugs that need to be taken together. Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, reflecting on the early days of the government's HIV treatment programme, said that 10 years ago it cost the state R10000 a year to treat one patient, but the introduction of the fixed-dose combination in 2012 had helped cut costs by 99%.” (The Sunday Times (11 October 2015) *'We cannot afford not to roll out Aids drug'*)

In September 2015 the *Mail & Guardian* points out that:

“The number of HIV-infected South Africans on antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) will more than double – from 3.1-million to 6.4-million – if the health department is to implement new World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, which was announced yesterday. The guidelines recommend that everyone infected with HIV, regardless of their CD4 counts are put on ARVs. A CD4 count is a measurement of the strength of someone's immune system. South Africa currently only offers South Africans with a CD4 count of below 500 cells/mm3 ARVs, although HIV-infected pregnant women and children under the age of five receive life-long medication, irrespective of their CD4 count.” (Mail & Guardian (30 September 2015) *HIV-infected South Africans on ARVs could double*)

It is also noted in this document that:

“...the health department’s deputy director for HIV, Yogan Pillay...said...the 3.1-million people on ARVs in the public health sector are covered at a cost of R4 000 per patient per year. Each year, an additional 600 000 more people go on treatment.” (ibid)

In July 2015 the *United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* in a worldwide report that:

“The largest increases in antiretroviral therapy among people living with HIV and TB have occurred in India, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.” (United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (July 2015) *How Aids Has Changed Everything — Meeting the MDG Targets*, p.54)

This report also states:

“The fall in AIDS-related deaths is having profound positive effects on health outcomes and demographic trends in many countries. In South Africa, for example, life expectancy rose from 52 years in 2005 to 61 years in 2014, the number of AIDS related deaths fell by more than half, and AIDS-related deaths as proportion of overall mortality dropped from 51% in 2005 to 31% in 2014...” (ibid, p.103)

In July 2015 the *South African National AIDS Council* notes that:

“...although HIV related stigma and discrimination is still prevalent, this is lower than previously estimated...” (South African National AIDS Council (21 July 2015) *Battle against AIDS is a battle against stigma*)

The *Mail & Guardian* in July 2015 states:

“South Africa’s largest HIV lobby group, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), is demanding that everyone infected with HIV in the country is offered antiretroviral therapy (ART) immediately after their diagnosis. Currently, less than half (3.1-million) of the country’s estimated 6.4-million HIV-infected citizens receive anti-HIV treatment, according to health department data. This is partly because government guidelines specify that only those HIV-positive people with a CD4 count of 500 and below qualify for free treatment. A CD4 count is a measurement of the strength of a person’s immune system. Some people with HIV have also not been tested for the virus and have therefore yet to be diagnosed.” (Mail & Guardian (23 July 2015) *TAC wants free treatment for all HIV infected*)

In July 2015 the *Dispatch* points out that:

“President Jacob Zuma on Wednesday welcomed the report by the United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS(UNAIDS) on the significant progress South Africa has made in the fight against HIV/AIDS...The report named South Africa, which was once counted amongst countries that had major difficulties with regards to HIV and AIDS, as one of the countries that had made significant strides in halting and reversing the epidemic. The report announced that South Africa had turned around its decline in life expectancy within 10 years, rising from 51 years in 2005 to 61 by the end of 2014, on the back a massive increase in access to antiretroviral therapy.” (The Dispatch (15 July 2015) *Zuma welcomes UN report on SA’s fight against HIV/AIDS*)

A report released in June 2015 the *Human Sciences Research Council* states that:

“The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) has announced concrete measures to tackle persistent forms of stigma and discrimination that continue to affect large numbers of people infected with HIV and/or TB. These measures include a legal advice and litigation service offered through the nationwide network of Justice Centres run by Legal Aid South Africa.” (Human Sciences Research Council (12 June 2015) *Index report confirms HIV-positive women bear brunt of stigma*)

In June 2015 the *South African National AIDS Council* states in a report that:

“...while South Africa has made good progress in dealing with HIV related stigma, approximately one-third of people living with HIV who took part in the study still reported some form of stigma.” (South African National AIDS Council (June 2015) *Sanac News Issue 11: June 2015*, p.6)

A report issued in June 2015 by *Times Live* states:

“Almost 500 women in South Africa were robbed of the chance to have children after they were sterilised against their wishes because they were HIV positive.” (Times Live (10 June 2015) *HIV positive women sterilised against their wishes*)

In June 2015 the *Government of South Africa* states in a report that:

“South Africa has the biggest HIV treatment programme in the world with more than 3 million people on life-saving antiretrovirals.” (Government of South Africa (10 June 2015) *SA needs to reduce rate of HIV transmission*)

A report released in June 2015 by *Medecins Sans Frontieres* points out that:

“A new survey released today shows that shortages of essential HIV and tuberculosis medicines in most South African provinces are a systematic obstacle to the success of the largest antiretroviral treatment program in the world.” (Medecins Sans Frontieres (11 June 2015) *South Africa: Drug shortages threaten progress made in the world's largest HIV programme*)

This report also notes that:

“The survey shows that most drugs are available in South Africa's medicine depots but patients are unable to get their prescriptions filled in local health centers because of local logistical and management problems...there have been frequent stock outs of other HIV and TB medicines. Patients who require medicine other than the standard first line HIV drug are often already more vulnerable because they have clinical complications or because they are children or adolescents.” (ibid)

In May 2015 the *South African National AIDS Council* states in a survey report that:

“...moderate levels of HIV-related external and internalized stigma and discrimination were found.” (South African National AIDS Council (May 2015) *The People Living With HIV Stigma Index: South Africa 2014 - Summary Report*, p.26)

In June 2015 a report issued by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the preceding year notes:

“The social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS remained a problem, especially in rural communities. Civil society organizations such as the Treatment Action Campaign and government campaigns continued to address the problem.” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - South Africa*)

This document also states that:

“HIV/AIDS remained one of the leading causes of death in the country. UNAIDS estimated that 200,000 individuals died of AIDS-related illnesses in 2013. During the year 81.6 percent of antenatal clients with HIV received ARV treatment. The government continued to improve care for HIV-positive mothers, and the mother-to-child transmission remained below 3 percent during the year.” (ibid)

A report published in February 2015 by *Amnesty International* reviewing events of 2014 states:

“Access to anti-retroviral treatment for people living with HIV continued to expand, with 2.5 million South Africans on treatment according to official figures at July 2014. As a result, life expectancy in South Africa increased.” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15, South Africa*)

In December 2014 *Reuters* states that:

“South Africa has more than 6 million people, or 18 percent of the population, infected with HIV -- the heaviest caseloads in the world. It also has one of largest treatment programs. Nearly 3 million people are on antiretrovirals treatment...” (Reuters (24 December 2014) *Aspen, Cipla win share of \$860 million South Africa AIDS drug tender*)

The *Dispatch* in December 2014 points out that:

“Stigma and discrimination against those living with HIV and Aids persists, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said earlier today.” (The Dispatch (1 December 2014) *HIV/Aids discrimination persists: Ramaphosa*)

In 2014 the *South African National AIDS Council* states in a report that:

“Eligibility criteria for ART initiation have evolved progressively over time.” (South African National AIDS Council (2014) *Progress Report On The National Strategic Plan For Hiv, Tb And Stis (2012 – 2016, p.19)*)

A report published in October 2014 by *Amnesty International* states:

“Delivery of public health services remains hampered by the legacy of South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past...Weakness in the management of public health facilities and systems...insufficient investment...especially in poorer regions of the country...deteriorating infrastructure...stock shortages of medicine...and a staffing crisis in the public sector...have entrenched past inequities in access to and quality of health care services...Those living in rural areas (43.6% of the population) often experience the greatest adversities accessing quality health care. For example, they are served by only 12% of the country’s doctors and 19% of nurses...Furthermore, profound inequalities persist between the private and public health systems in terms

of infrastructure and resources...” (Amnesty International (9 October 2014) *South Africa: Struggle for maternal health: Barriers to antenatal care in South Africa*, p.17)

This document also states that:

“HIV and AIDS are the biggest burden on the health system. Over 330,000 people are thought to have died as a result of the South African government’s failure to implement effective antiretroviral treatment between 2000 and 2005...Since then, the government has significantly increased access to treatment through reliance on the primary health care system. The number of health facilities able to start patients on antiretroviral treatment has increased from fewer than 500 at the end of 2009, to over 2,500 in 2011...” (ibid, p.18)

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“People living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa continue to suffer multiple forms of stigma, discrimination and abuse as a result of their HIV status...HIV-related stigma in South Africa is rooted in the context of the effect of the virus on individuals, families and communities over the past two decades. Before antiretroviral treatment was available through the public health system, a diagnosis of HIV or AIDS was considered to be an imminent death sentence, often preceded by disfigurement and suffering...Despite commendable advances on HIV treatment since 2006 (see above), HIV- and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination remain major barriers to effective HIV prevention...” (ibid, p.22)

Voice of America in September 2014 states:

“A new medical study out of South Africa has found heartening news in the nation with the world’s highest burden of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Their findings reveal that South Africans with HIV can live as long as HIV patients in the United States - provided they begin anti-retroviral therapy early enough.” (Voice of America (9 September 2014) *S. Africa Study Hails AIDS Treatment Success Rates*)

In April 2014 a paper issued by the *Human Sciences Research Council* states:

“The past decade has seen South Africa make considerable progress in ‘turning the tide of HIV incidence’. “(Human Sciences Research Council (1 April 2014) *South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012*, p.xxii)

Health-E-News in April 2014 states:

“South Africa introduced free ARVs in the public sector in April 2004...today South Africa has the biggest treatment programme in the world. Some 2.4 million people have received the life-saving treatment leading to increases in life expectancy and record low levels of mother-to-child HIV transmission rates.” (Health-E-News (4 April 2014) *South Africa celebrates 10 years of free HIV treatment*)

A document published in January 2014 by the *United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* notes that

“There are 6.1 million people living with HIV in South Africa. Since 2009, the government has massively scaled up HIV prevention and treatment programmes.”

(United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (17 January 2014) *New HIV report finds big drop in new HIV infections in South Africa*)

A paper issued in January 2014 by the *Southern African HIV Clinicians Society* lists the "...common adverse drug reactions of ARV agents..." for Southern Africa (Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (January 2014) *Adult antiretroviral therapy guidelines 2014*, p.123)

In 2013 the *United Nations Development Programme* states in a report that:

"South Africa's HIV response is grounded in a rich stock of strategic information and analysis. Antenatal clinic HIV surveys have been conducted since 1990, and the country is unique in having conducted four national, household-based HIV and health surveys..." (United Nations Development Programme (2013) *Joint Programme of Support of the UN Joint Team on HIV and TB*, p.12)

A report issued in 2013 by the *Government of South Africa* notes that:

"Significant progress has been made over the last three to four years to significantly reduce self-reported stigma and previously high levels of HIV-related discrimination for people living with HIV, although the country still experiences high levels of violence towards sexual minorities." (Government of South Africa (2013) *UNGASS South Africa Report*, p.6)

References

Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15, South Africa*

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/south-africa/report-south-africa/>

(Accessed 20 October 2015)

Amnesty International (9 October 2014) *South Africa: Struggle for maternal health: Barriers to antenatal care in South Africa*

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR53/006/2014/en/>

(Accessed 21 October 2015)

The Dispatch (15 July 2015) *Zuma welcomes UN report on SA's fight against HIV/AIDS*

<http://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/zuma-welcomes-un-report-on-sas-fight-against-hivaids/>

(Accessed 21 October 2015)

The Dispatch (1 December 2014) *HIV/Aids discrimination persists: Ramaphosa*

<http://www.dispatchlive.co.za/gen/hivaids-discrimination-persists-ramaphosa/>

(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Government of South Africa (10 June 2015) *SA needs to reduce rate of HIV transmission*

<http://reliefweb.int/report/south-africa/sa-needs-reduce-rate-hiv-transmission>

(Accessed 20 October 2015)

Government of South Africa (2013) *UNGASS South Africa Report*
<http://www.sanac.org.za/resources/publications/reports>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Health-E-News (4 April 2014) *South Africa celebrates 10 years of free HIV treatment*
<http://www.health-e.org.za/2014/04/04/south-africa-celebrates-ten-years-free-hiv-treatment/>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Human Sciences Research Council (12 June 2015) *Index report confirms HIV-positive women bear brunt of stigma*
<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/news/view/stigma-index-report>
(Accessed 20 October 2015)

Human Sciences Research Council (1 April 2014) *South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012*
<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-outputs/view/6871>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Mail & Guardian (21 October 2015) *SA makes major strides in HIV treatment and prevention*
<http://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-21-00-sa-makes-major-strides-in-hiv-treatment-and-prevention>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Mail & Guardian (30 September 2015) *HIV-infected South Africans on ARVs could double*
<http://mg.co.za/article/2015-09-30-hiv-infected-south-africans-on-arvs-could-double>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Mail & Guardian (23 July 2015) *TAC wants free treatment for all HIV infected*
<http://mg.co.za/article/2015-07-23-lobby-group-demands-free-treatment-for-all-hiv-positive>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Medecins Sans Frontieres (11 June 2015) *South Africa: Drug shortages threaten progress made in the world's largest HIV programme*
<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/south-africa-drug-shortages-threaten-progress-made-worlds-largest-hiv-program>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)
This is a subscription database

Reuters (24 December 2014) *Aspen, Cipla win share of \$860 million South Africa AIDS drug tender*
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/us-safrica-aids-drug-idUSKBN0K20JP20141224>
(Accessed 20 October 2015)

South African National AIDS Council (21 July 2015) *Battle against AIDS is a battle against stigma*

<http://sanac.org.za/news/item/240-battle-against-aids-is-a-battle-against-stigma>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

South African National AIDS Council (June 2015) *Sanac News Issue 11: June 2015*
<http://sanac.org.za/news/newsletters/item/228-sanac-news-issue-11-june-2015>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

South African National AIDS Council (May 2015) *The People Living With HIV Stigma Index: South Africa 2014 - Summary Report*
http://www.sanac.org.za/resources/cat_view/7-publications/9-reports
(Accessed 20 October 2015)

South African National AIDS Council (2014) *Progress Report On The Strategic Plan For Hiv, Tb And Stis (2012 – 2016)*
<http://www.sanac.org.za/resources/publications/reports>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (January 2014) *Adult antiretroviral therapy guidelines 2014*
<http://www.sajhivmed.org.za/index.php/hivmed/article/view/330>
(Accessed 22 October 2015)

The Sunday Times (11 October 2015) 'We cannot afford not to roll out Aids drug'
<http://www.lexisnexis.co.uk>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)
This is a subscription database

Times Live (10 June 2015) *HIV positive women sterilised against their wishes*
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2015/06/10/HIV-positive-women-sterilised-against-their-wishes>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (July 2015) *How Aids Has Changed Everything — Meeting the MDG Targets*
http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/MDG6_15years-15lessonsfromtheAIDSresponse
Accessed Wednesday 21 October 2015

United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (17 January 2014) *New HIV report finds big drop in new HIV infections in South Africa*
<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/new-hiv-report-finds-big-drop-new-hiv-infections-south-africa>
(Accessed 21 October 2015)
This is a subscription database

United Nations Development Programme (2013) *Joint Programme of Support of the UN Joint Team on HIV and TB*
http://www.za.undp.org/content/south_africa/en/home/operations/projects/hiv_aids/joint-programme-of-support-of-the-united-nations-joint-team-on-h.html
(Accessed 21 October 2015)

United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - South Africa*

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/559bd53b28.html>

(Accessed 20 October 2015)

Voice of America (9 September 2014) *S. Africa Study Hails AIDS Treatment Success Rates*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/s-africa-study-hails-aids-treatment-success-rates>

(Accessed 21 October 2015)

This is a subscription database

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reliefweb

Regional Surveys of the World

Reuters

United Kingdom Home Office

United States Department of State

UNHCR Refworld