



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Zimbabwe - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 9 & Friday 10 March 2017**

### **Information on treatment of HIV;**

*Reuters* published a report in March 2017 which states:

“...UNAIDS says Zimbabwe is among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa worst-affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and has around 1.4 million people living with HIV, although prevalence rates have dropped steadily since the late 1990s” (*Reuters* (1 March 2017) *Zimbabwe's struggling health system leans on unsung heroines*).

*CAJ News* in February 2017 notes that:

“SIGNS of increased malnutrition among people living with HIV and AIDS on antiretroviral treatment are emerging in Zimbabwe, worsened by a devastating strike by doctors. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) raised alarm at the situation that is worsened by the country suffering severe drought, which is the most acute Southern Africa has suffered in years. Over 4 million Zimbabweans are food-insecure. The UN agency warned of dire consequences and a reversal of breakthroughs attained against HIV/AIDS over the years in the Southern African country...” (*CAJ News* (24 February 2017) *Zimbabwe: Malnutrition, Strikes Worsen Zimbabwe Aids Situation*).

In February 2017 a document issued by *Avert* notes:

“Zimbabwe is part of the group of sub-Saharan African countries with the greatest access to antiretroviral treatment (ART), at more than 61% for adults.<sup>22</sup> In fact, 5% of all people worldwide who began ART since 2010 were in Zimbabwe, showing that efforts to increase access are improving. It is thought that 9,000 people initiate treatment every month” (*Avert* (13 February 2017) *HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe*).

A report issued in February 2017 by the *Sunday Mail* states:

“Government estimates that 1,4 million people are living with HIV, of which 86 percent are on the ART programme. As Zimbabwe scales up life-saving ART for people living with HIV, concerns are rife that the absence of mass routine viral load testing will hamper extending treatment to those who need it. People living with HIV bemoan the lack of viral load testing machines at hospitals to enable them to measure the amount of virus in their blood” (*Sunday Mail* (13 February 2017) *HIV prevalence rate declines: Zimphia*).

In February 2017 the *Herald* notes:

“Zimbabwe is on course to meeting the HIV and Aids United Nations global targets aimed at increasing the number of HIV positive people who know their status, those on treatment and those with an undetectable level of HIV by 2020. Addressing journalists at a Zimbabwe Lawyers' for Human Rights meeting held in Harare recently, National Aids Council monitoring and evaluation director Mr Amon Mpofu said...of the 1,2 million Zimbabweans estimated to be living with HIV, 74,2 percent

now know their status from which 86,8 percent were on antiretroviral treatment. He said of those on treatment, 86,5 percent had undetectable levels of HIV" (Herald (8 February 2017) *Zimbabwe: HIV Targets Within Reach – Nac*).

In January 2017 the *Zimbabwe Situation* points out in a report that:

"HIV remains a major public health challenge in Zimbabwe with 1,4 million people believed to be living with the virus although the country has recorded a remarkable decline in HIV prevalence compared to other countries in the region" (Zimbabwe Situation (11 January 2017) *Global Fund, UNDP advance \$143m for HIV programmes*).

A report released in December 2016 by the *Conversation* states:

"There are about 1.4 million people living with HIV in Zimbabwe...About 62% of people who are eligible for treatment take antiretrovirals" (Conversation (14 December 2016) *HIV has no borders, but its treatment does. Why this needs to change*).

In December 2016 the *Herald* notes:

"OVER half of HIV-positive people in Zimbabwe taking anti-retroviral drugs have lesser chances of transmitting the virus to their partners, a survey has revealed. The study, officially known as the Zimbabwe Population Based Impact Assessment (Zimphia), also showed that an estimated 1, 2 million people were HIV positive, down from 1,4 million estimated in the last survey. Of these, an estimated 888 000 knew their status while 763 000 were on ART. About 86 percent of those on antiretroviral treatment had their viral load suppressed" (Herald (7 December 2016) *Zimbabwe: 'Arvs Reduce HIV Transmission By 50pc'*).

The *World Health Organisation* in December 2016 points out that:

"The government has disclosed the fall of new HIV infections in the country by 50% in the last 7 years...and an impressive viral load suppression of 84% for those on Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART)" (World Health Organisation (1 December 2016) *Zimbabwe scores big on HIV control*).

## **Information on treatment of diabetes**

A report released in November 2016 by *News Day* points out that:

"Diabetic patients are struggling to access drugs such as metformin, glibenclamide and insulin injections and the treatment is costly, running into hundreds of dollars per month" (News Day (23 November 2016) *Diabetic patients set to receive free treatment*).

In November 2016 *News Day* notes that:

"About 1,5 million Zimbabweans are diabetic, with some of them unaware they have the condition, Health minister David Parirenyatwa has revealed. "In Zimbabwe, the last statistics we have are from 2005 and our prevalence rate was 10% of the population. I believe the figures have risen to between 12 and 15% and that means up to 1,5 million are diabetic...Of these, 95% of the diabetes is type two, which is

mainly caused by poor lifestyles namely consumption of too much starch, which is converted to fat, leading to obesity, hyperlipidaemia, hypertension and diabetes mellitus...Parirenyatwa admitted that diabetes drugs were expensive, but said the Zimbabwe Diabetes Association (ZDA) is negotiating with drug manufacturer, Novartis International Norvoldsk to lower the prices. A diabetic patient on drugs needs about \$30 per month, minus the cost of the tests for sugar levels in their body, according to ZDA" (News Day (16 November 2016) *1,5 million Zimbabweans diabetic — Parirenyatwa*).

In May 2016 *Voice of America* points out that:

"Diabetic patients, especially those living in rural Zimbabwe, are finding it difficult to access drugs such as metformin, glibenclamide and insulin injections. The ongoing cash shortages have worsened the problem" (Voice of America (2 May 2016) *Zimbabweans Struggling to Get Diabetes Drugs*).

A report published in April 2016 by *Voice of America* notes that:

"The Zimbabwe Diabetic Association estimates that 10 out of 100 people in the country have diabetes but may be unaware as many people remain undiagnosed due to lack of knowledge about the disease. Dr. John Mangwiro, president of the association, said they are lobbying government to provide free access to diabetic medications as the cost of managing the disease continues to escalate" (Voice of America (11 April 2016) *Zimbabwe Diabetic Association Seeking Free Access to Medications*).

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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.

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