



Press release - Kigali, December 2

New Coalition PLUS campaign

ONE MILLION DEATHS | ZERO PLAN

TAKE ACTION AGAINST AIDS

Since 2016, States throughout the world have committed to halving the number of HIV-related deaths by 2020. Yet one year from this deadline, we are still a long way from reaching this goal. As part of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa, held in Kigali, Coalition PLUS, an international network of associations in the fight against AIDS and viral hepatitis, is calling for the implementation of a specific plan to ensure that the one million deaths figure is well and truly a thing of the past.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS fell by just 30,000 [1]. At this rate, the 2020 target to bring the number down to under 500,000 deaths per year [2] will not be achieved until 2028! That is why we are launching our campaign “One million deaths, Zero plan” at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), which will be held in the capital of Rwanda from 2 to 7 December [3].

Applying the global strategy!

Currently, the World Health Organization's strategy to eradicate the HIV epidemic is based on the early treatment of infected individuals in order to maintain their health and reduce the risk of transmission thanks to an undetectable viral load. But the appalling number of deaths demonstrates that this strategy is not sufficiently applied: despite everything, a large proportion of HIV-positive individuals enter care at an advanced stage of infection [4] and do not benefit from the treatment resources needed to stay alive because they are simply not available in their country.

As an example, 181,000 HIV-positive individuals die from cryptococcal meningitis [5] even though effective treatments exist to treat this illness that attacks the nervous system. Yet diagnostic tests and treatment are not available in the regions where the burden of disease is the highest. Tuberculosis also continues to take its toll and remains the most common cause of death among people living with HIV. Yet 60% of people co-infected with HIV and tuberculosis are not diagnosed and are not treated [6].

“Due to a lack of sufficient healthcare infrastructure, the lack of medicine available at primary healthcare centers, and a lack of access to testing, we estimate that 6,500 people died of AIDS in my country in 2018, two-thirds of which were women and children.

A sad reality, and a far cry from our hope for a world at last free from this epidemic”,

**Bintou Dembélé,
Director of ARCAD-SIDA in Mali
and Coalition PLUS Administrator,
explains angrily.**

Treating opportunistic infections by applying the WHO recommendations

We demand the implementation of a specific plan to better treat the opportunistic infections that affect people with advanced HIV:

- Reinforce early diagnosis, retention in care and adherence to treatment;
- Make available all medication recommended as part of the care package defined by the WHO for the treatment of advanced HIV [7];
- Better train healthcare staff in the treatment of advanced HIV;
- Equip healthcare facilities with a better system to monitor the development of the epidemic and notification of HIV-related deaths;
- Reduce the stigmatization and discrimination that render access to care extremely difficult for the populations most vulnerable to the epidemic;
- Increase national funding allocated to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

**"Let us not forget our dead! The medicines to treat opportunistic infections exist and are effective, but they are not available. This morbid paradox can no longer be acceptable. We are calling on UNAIDS, PEPFAR, the Global Fund and all the governments concerned to tackle this problem head on!" declares
Pr. Hakima Himmich,
President of Coalition PLUS.**

CONTACT & DOCUMENTATION

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Download from our website www.coalitionplus.org
Advocacy guide “One Million Deaths, Zero Plan”
Booklet “To Our Dead, Testimony From The Living”
Campaign poster and flyer**

About Coalition PLUS. Created in 2008, Coalition PLUS is an international network of associations fighting HIV and viral hepatitis committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN. It operates in 52 countries alongside some one hundred organizations, fully involving the communities most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. Its values: respect for diversity, non-discrimination, solidarity and innovation.

Sources and references :

- [1] According to UNAIDS, 770,000 HIV-related deaths were recorded in 2018 compared to 800,000 in 2017: <http://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>
- [2] In 2016, at the High Level Meeting on Ending AIDS, the UN Member States committed to halving the number of HIV-related deaths worldwide by 2020, that is to say down from one million to fewer than 500,000 deaths: http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/unaids-data-2018_en.pdf, p. 4.
- [3] ICASA official website: <http://www.icasa2019rwanda.org/>
- [4] In low-income countries, 30% to 40% of people living with HIV who visit healthcare centers are at an advanced stage. Ref.: Carmona S, Bor J, Nattey C, et al. “Persistent high burden of advanced HIV disease among patients seeking care in South Africa’s National HIV Program: data from a nationwide laboratory cohort. Clin Infect Dis.” March 2018: <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciy045>.
- [5] Rajasingham R, Smith RM, Park BJ, et al. Global burden of disease of HIV-associated cryptococcal meningitis: an updated analysis. Lancet Infect Dis. May 2017: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5818156/>.
- [6] UNAIDS data: <https://www.unaids.org/en/topic/tuberculosis>
- [7] WHO recommendations for managing advanced HIV disease: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/255884/9789241550062-eng.pdf?sessionid=4EB537CF2E352DF9BC4E2B6CE871205A?sequence=1>.