

Press Release



People Living with HIV Statement at the End of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Harare; 10 December 2020

Today marks the end of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. This year's campaign ran under the theme; "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!". Violence in all its forms is one of the structural drivers that increases the risk of HIV infection particularly for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). AGYW and Key Populations living with HIV are not spared from violence.

COVID-19 has made it very apparent that there is need for bold action to stem the growing tide of gender-based violence cases. Quarantines and social isolation have negatively influenced mental health, increasing the risk of problematic coping behaviors including family violence and conflict. The pandemic has exacerbated key risk factors for Violence Against Women and Girls, such as food shortages, unemployment, economic insecurity, school closures, massive migration flows and the threat of civil unrest. This has resulted in an alarming increase of multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence fueled by household economic and confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures. School closures, financial and food insecurity have heightened the risk of violence for girls including sexual exploitation, harassment, and child marriages.

The increase in cases reminds us that there is still more to be done to effectively eradicate all forms of gendered violence. It is a call to for people living with HIV (PLHIV) in their diversity to act, redouble efforts and make their voices count. For an effective response to be mounted, PLHIV join the call for increased funding for proven strategies to prevent gender-based violence. These include social protection programs that guarantee access to food, water and education for vulnerable groups particularly AGYW and Key Populations including LGBTI and sex workers.

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In an effort to adapt and provide support to PLHIV, the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) and Zimbabwe Young Positives (ZY+) has developed early warning systems and integrated COVID 19 response plans with advocacy for elimination of Gender-based violence. Some of the best practices adopted include virtual safe spaces with discussions on GBV, referral systems for GBV victims, psycho- social support sessions and a call centre for people living with HIV and their communities known as *Kutabila Platform*. The platform offers HIV prevention and treatment, SRH, psycho-social support, key population and youth friendly services and impact mitigation of COVID 19 and HIV.

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For More Information

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PLHIV, HAVE A QUESTION, NEED HELP?

TOLL FREE 08080441

ADD EXTENSION ACCORDING TO YOUR REGION

BULAWAYO:	0	MASH-WEST:	5
HARARE:	1	MASVINGO:	6
MANICALAND:	2	MAT-NORTH:	7
MASH CENT:	3	MAT-SOUTH:	8
MASH-EAST:	4	MIDLANDS:	9
YOUTH, KP & GENERAL ENQUIRIES:	#		

Services: COVID-19, MENTAL HEALTH, ARVS, VIRAL LOAD

TOLL FREE

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Logos: Ministry of Health Services, National AIDS Council, ZNNP+, ZY+, UNAIDS