



Press Statement

PLHIV Statement on the 2025 National Candlelight Memorial

Theme: *“We Remember. We Rise. We Lead!!!”*

Umzingwane, 30 November 2025

The Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+), today hosts the National Candlelight Memorial at Mzingwane High School, Umzingwane District, Matabeleland South Province. This year’s memorial runs under the theme “We Remember. We Rise. We Lead!!!”, a call for communities to honour the past, confront today’s challenges, and lead boldly toward an HIV-free future.

Today, we reflect on the progress made, acknowledge the gaps that remain, and recommit ourselves to ensuring that Zimbabwe continues moving decisively toward ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Despite significant national progress including surpassing the 95-95 targets, achieving high viral suppression, and reducing new HIV infections communities still face barriers and inequalities that threaten these gains.

As ZNNP+, we highlight the following priority actions needed to sustain and strengthen the HIV response:

1. **A Clear National Plan to Sustain the HIV Response Amid Funding Reductions:** Zimbabwe’s HIV response has entered a critical phase marked by declining external donor support. Funding cuts are placing pressure on prevention programmes, community-led initiatives including social contracting of community organizations, and critical service delivery systems.

To this, we call for a comprehensive national sustainability plan, increased domestic resource investment, and protection of community-led services that are most affected by reduced donor funding. Without sustainable financing, the hard-won gains made over the past three decades are at risk.

2. **Guaranteeing Uninterrupted Access to ART for All People Living with HIV:** Access to antiretroviral therapy remains a lifeline for PLHIV. ZNNP+ urges the government and partners to ensure Zero stock-outs of ARVs, efficient supply chains, consistent access for mobile populations, adolescents, key and vulnerable populations. No person living with HIV should be left behind; ART must remain accessible, affordable, and uninterrupted.

3. **Measured and People-Centered Integration of HIV Services into Primary Health Care:** While integration of HIV services into primary health systems is important for sustainability, it must be measured and grounded in community realities.

Integration must preserve the quality and specialization of HIV care, avoid overburdening primary health facilities, include strong training and resourcing for health workers, protect the dignity and privacy of PLHIV, and integration should strengthen—not dilute—our national HIV response.

4. **Prioritizing Advanced HIV Disease (AHD), NCDs, and Mental Health in the HIV Care Package:** PLHIV face increasing risks from advanced HIV disease, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and mental health conditions. These conditions remain underprioritized and underfunded. We call for the urgent inclusion of AHD screening and management, NCD prevention and treatment (including hypertension, diabetes, cancers), Mental health services and psychosocial support, in all HIV treatment and care platforms. Holistic care is essential for PLHIV to live long, healthy, and dignified lives.

Call to Action

As we light our candles and remember the lives lost to AIDS, ZNNP+ calls upon:

Government: To sustain political leadership, increase domestic financing, protect ART access, and ensure an inclusive HIV strategy that puts communities at the center.

Development Partners: To continue supporting community-led responses, recognizing that communities are the backbone of treatment literacy, adherence support, stigma reduction, human-rights monitoring, and service accountability.

Community Structures: To rise and lead through advocacy, service delivery, peer support, and monitoring of HIV services, ensuring that no one is left behind.

All Zimbabweans: To fight stigma, protect the rights of PLHIV, and work together to secure the gains made in the HIV response.

Only through strong, well-resourced, and community-driven action can Zimbabwe reach the 2030 goal of ending AIDS.

[#candlelightmemorial2025](#)

[#WeRemember](#)

[#WeRise](#)

[#WeLead](#)



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