



Health is a fundamental human right

Health, along with education, is also an indispensable component of development.

In the first decades after independence, African countries invested in health care. Average life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa rose from 39.9 years in 1960 to 50.6 years in 1995.

Now, however, **life expectancies in many African countries are dropping**, driven by HIV/AIDS and a resurgence of malaria and tuberculosis.

3 million Africans died of AIDS in the year 2002.

Life-saving treatment available since the 1990s has reduced AIDS deaths dramatically in the U.S. and other rich countries.

Neither these treatments, nor other resources needed to combat HIV/AIDS, are available to the vast majority of people in Africa. Only 1% of those living with AIDS in Africa have access to anti-AIDS drugs.

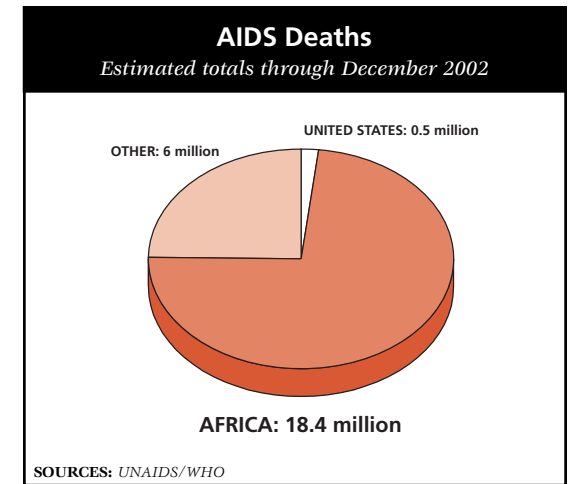
While the HIV virus affects people of all races, **most of those dying of AIDS are Black.**

The spread of the pandemic and the world's failure to respond reveal a system of global apartheid in which the right to health—and to life itself—is largely determined by race, class, gender and geography.

Africa's Right to Health Campaign



www.africaaction.org



Africans are taking action

In Africa, as elsewhere, stigmatization, stereotypes and denial have blocked effective responses to HIV/AIDS. This is changing, slowly. At recent continent-wide meetings, people living with HIV/AIDS have demanded more urgent action from government leaders and experts.

African activists, medical professionals, and many government officials are now struggling to save lives and prevent new infections. They face immense challenges. The AIDS pandemic reflects—and deepens—economic inequality, civil conflict and, most critical of all, the subordination of women. Such factors must be addressed within each African country.

But there are also overwhelming obstacles that are imposed from outside. **Corporate greed, foreign economic domination and global racism have all contributed to the spread of AIDS.**

Africa's Right to Health Campaign

- ▶ End the injustices that gave rise to and now perpetuate the AIDS pandemic.
- ▶ Remove international obstacles that deny Africans the resources they need to respond effectively to the pandemic and the wider health emergency it represents.

Africa Action is fighting for the following goals: (1) unconditional cancellation of Africa's illegitimate foreign debts; (2) equal access to drugs and treatment; (3) an end to IMF/World Bank colonialism; (4) an end to discrimination on the basis of race, gender, HIV status and sexual orientation; (5) promotion of a public discourse on reparations (the need for the West to invest in Africa's health care as an obligation—not charity).

Media attention comes and goes, but the deaths continue. **Donate to the campaign. Join our networks and keep up by visiting www.africaaction.org.**



Africa Action: Incorporating the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), The Africa Fund, and the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC)

1634 Eye Street, N.W., #810, Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202)546-7961 • Fax: (202)546-1545
E-mail: africaaction@igc.org

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Global Apartheid or Global Justice

Access to treatment is key

People around the world are rejecting the notion that HIV/AIDS treatment is too expensive for Africa and other poor regions. In 2001, activists and African countries forced the World Trade Organization to acknowledge that public health takes priority over patents and profits.

But the pharmaceutical companies and the Bush Administration refuse to admit that treatment is an essential part of prevention. To them, aggressive patent protection is more important than African lives. **In effect, they are saying that millions of Africans should just be left to die.**

The Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS can provide life-saving treatment to those living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. But the refusal of the U.S. to pay its share is undermining the Fund's important work and costing millions of lives.

Debt bondage is killing Africans— It's time for cancellation

Most African countries still spend more on repaying debts than on health care for their people.

These debts come from old loans, many to dictators long fallen. They came with strings attached—economic policies that have since failed. Yet the debt still looms as a giant obstacle to Africa's development and the fight for health.

Economic colonialism

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is linked to structural inequalities. Poverty and patterns of discrimination leave women vulnerable. Malnutrition reduces resistance to disease, including HIV/AIDS. Migrant labor patterns (still in place from colonialism and apartheid) raise the risk of infection.

Policies imposed by the World Bank and other creditors forced African governments to cut spending on health. New "user fees" put medical care out of reach for millions, leading to an increase in diseases and a decline in health standards. Yet the World Bank still holds more influence over Africa's economic policies than do African elected officials.

Global racism or common humanity

It is no accident that Africa is the continent most affected by HIV/AIDS, and that minorities are the most affected within the United States. The pandemic starkly reveals the fault lines of deep inequality in the world order.

Vulnerability is linked to poverty, poverty to race, and race to the centuries-old history of the slave trade and colonialism. **The rich countries' failure to act now is linked to the fact that the majority of those affected are poor, Black and female.**

The response to HIV/AIDS will show whether common humanity will prevail over corporate greed. It will also show whether the world is ready to confront centuries of global injustice.