

'No cure' for HIV in Zimbabwe says UN, following claims from local preacher

The United Nations in Zimbabwe is reaffirming that people living with HIV and AIDS need to continue with antiretroviral (ARV) therapy to manage their infections, after a local preacher reportedly claimed that he had received divine revelation of an herbal cure.

In a [statement](#) released on Wednesday by the [UN in Zimbabwe](#), Dr. Alex Gasaira, [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) representative in the country, explicitly stated that “there is no cure for HIV infection.”

According to media reports, the Zimbabwean minister notified his congregation in the capital Harare on Sunday of the “cure” for HIV and AIDS. He claimed that a healing plant had been revealed to him by God, sparking a media outcry.

The nation’s largest newspaper, the Harare Herald, reported that his claims were scientifically baseless, and that the Zimbabwean Government was actively discouraging the purchase of unapproved medicines.

Zimbabwe saw some 30,000 AIDS-related deaths in 2016, with well over one million people living with HIV accounted for in the same year, according to statistics from UNAIDS; the agency working towards ending the global pandemic as a public health threat, by 2030.

Those desperate for a cure should not abandon their ARV therapy, the UN advised. Any researchers working in the field, the statement said, are urged to subject their treatments to the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health for proper clinical trials and procedures.

Until a cure is verified, effective ARV drugs can control HIV infections and help prevent transmission, “so that people with HIV, and those at substantial risk, can enjoy health, long and productive lives,” Dr. Gasasira added.

As of the end of last year, 87 percent of Zimbabweans living with HIV were aware of their status, and 74 percent of them were receiving treatment, the report states.

The United Nations is supporting Zimbabwe in its fight to stamp out HIV and AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, starting with informing citizens of their status and working to suppress infection through treatment.