

STAND UP FOR THE LIVES OF 5 MILLION SOUTH AFRICANS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS STOP THE 600 NEEDLESS AIDS DEATHS EACH DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

TREATMENT ACTION CAMPAIGN (TAC) APPEAL FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY for March to
Opening of Parliament on 14 February 2003

Dear friends, comrades and allies

On 14 February 2003, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is organizing a "Stand Up for Our Lives" march in Cape Town. This march will mark the opening of Parliament by President Thabo Mbeki. This will be one of the last opportunities for the South African government to demonstrate goodwill and to avoid civil conflict on HIV/AIDS.

We want this march to be the biggest national HIV/AIDS demonstration to show the will of the people in support of an HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention plan. The march already has the support of trade unions, religious leaders, youth and thousands of ordinary people. This is an appeal to our international allies to write to the South African government requesting that they sign and implement a treatment and prevention plan that includes anti-retroviral treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. The letter should also appeal to the government to immediately apply for compulsory licences against the drug companies to ensure an affordable and sustainable local supply of generic anti-retroviral medicines. You can write to your local consulate or embassy. Or, fax the Deputy President Mr. Jacob Zuma or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Our march will also pass the US Consulate. We are saying to the South African government: "We are standing up for our lives. Act now to save our country and continent." We are saying to the US government: "Stop militarism and military spending. Spend money on the real threats to global human security: poverty, environmental degradation and ill health. We urge the US government to fund the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment."

We cannot wait any longer for a visible and dynamic response from the government, business and international community. We do not need any more reports to tell us what we already know - HIV/AIDS is killing 600 people a day in this country and ruining lives and hopes. But with will and commitment this does not have to happen. With leadership from business and government, together with labour and communities, it is still possible to save lives and restore hope.

On 19/20 January 2003, the TAC National Executive and more than 100 activists, trade union, religious and people re-affirmed that if government fails to sign and implement a national treatment and prevention plan that we will start a national campaign of civil disobedience. We ask you to write to the South African government to avoid unnecessary conflict and instead to save the lives of our people.

Internationally, the work of MSF, Consumer Project on Technology, HealthGAP, ACT-UP, OXFAM, PATAM, IGLHRC, Bread for the World, GMHC, Action Southern Africa, Southern African Development Fund, Student Global AIDS Campaign, ATTAC, Brazilian HIV/AIDS NGOs, all the organisations of PATAM and others have sustained HIV/AIDS activism and a global conscience in the epidemic. We appeal to all organisations and individuals to write to the South African government and to assist in saving millions of lives in our country.

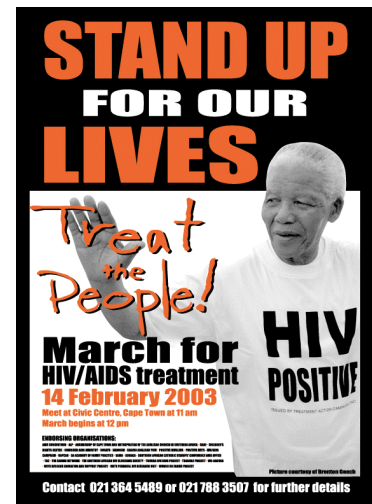
Thank you for your support and solidarity. The relevant contact addresses are pasted below. Please send your letters on or before 14 February 2003 and copy them to info@tac.org.za

Regards

Zackie Achmat, Nathan Geffen, Sindiswa Godwana, Mark Heywood, Nonkosi Khumalo, Mandla Majola, Tsakane Mangwane, Siphon Mthathi and Theo Steele on behalf of the Treatment Action Campaign

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT Sharonann Lynch: Tel 212-674-9598; salynch@healthgap.org

About Health GAP: We are an organization of U.S.-based AIDS and human rights activists, people living with HIV/AIDS, public health experts, fair trade advocates and concerned individuals who campaign against policies of neglect and avarice that deny treatment to millions and fuel the spread of HIV. We are dedicated to eliminating barriers to global access to affordable life-sustaining medicines for people living with HIV/AIDS as key to a comprehensive strategy to confront and ultimately stop the AIDS pandemic. We believe that the human right to life and to health must prevail over the pharmaceutical industry's excessive profits and expanding patent rights.



STAND WITH TAC AND ALL SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE LIVING WITH OR AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- 1) Sign on to the organizational letter of support at www.healthgap.org;
- 2) Send your own letter to South African officials and consulates;
- 3) If you are close to Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, or New York City, try to meet with consulate or embassy officials;
- 4) Write letters to the editors of local and major newspapers;
- 5) Organize or attend solidarity vigil in your area;

Go to <http://www.healthgap.org> for:

- Updates on solidarity vigils in the U.S. and how to organize your own vigil
- Information on where to send letters and requests for meetings with consulate officials in the US.
- Sample letters to the editors
- Sample short letters to consulates
- Template of press release for vigils and consulate meetings
- TAC's letter seeking international solidarity
- TAC's statement on the "Stand Up for Our Lives" march on February 14.

Be sure to notify TAC of the actions you are taking and send them copies of letters and press releases to: info@tac.org.za.

Keep up with TAC's campaign at:
<http://www.tac.org.za>.

