

A quarter of SAfrica's HIV carriers are young women

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About one quarter of South Africans newly infected by HIV are girls and women between the ages of 15 and 24, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said Monday.

The country counts 6.4 million people living with HIV, with some 400,000 new infections each year, Ramaphosa said in a speech marking World AIDS Day.

"One quarter of these new infections are in [young women](#) between the ages of 15 and 24," Ramaphosa said, or some 2,700 a day.

"Despite the progress that we have made in the past five years, the end of AIDS is not as near as we would like," he added.

"The social and economic cost of AIDS is enormous," he said.

Life expectancy has recovered to 61—from 53 in 2006—thanks to the distribution of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs,

Recalling the international AIDS conference in Melbourne, Australia, in July, Ramaphosa reiterated the "90, 90, 90 targets".

"We need to test 90 percent of South Africans for HIV, initiate 90 percent of those that are HIV-positive on treatment, and ensure that 90 percent of those on treatment are (rid of the virus) by 2030."

Currently, "we have 2.7 million South Africans initiated on anti-retroviral treatment," he said.

"A recent survey estimated that two million South Africans who are living with HIV do not know their status," Ramaphosa lamented.

He said everyone could take precautions against AIDS by using condoms, staying faithful to one partner and putting off [sexual relations](#).

South Africa, which has the highest incidence of AIDS in the world, will host the next global AIDS conference in the eastern port of Durban in July 2016.

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