



## **EFF STATEMENT ON WORLD AIDS DAY**

Wednesday, 1 December 2021

The EFF commemorates World AIDS Day. On this day we reflect on those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses globally since the start of the epidemic and we honor the millions of people living with HIV.

The spiralling social and economic crisis in South Africa, further heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, has highlighted the growing inequalities in access to essential HIV/AIDS healthcare services in the country.

The inequality that exists in our country stemming from the apartheid legacy, and a failure by the so-called democratic government to implement policies designed to redress the historical injustices, contributes to the unequal access to basic social services, including healthcare and HIV/AIDS treatment and care. The marginalised masses of our people remain the people with the least access to adequate treatment and care.

Further to this, HIV stigma continues to persist in our society, led and preserved by the government of the day. It is a harsh reality that the ANC government post Apartheid, medically isolated HIV positive Black women and forcefully sterilized them in sunrise and broad daylight of our Democracy.

Our communities, work places, spaces of education, healthcare facilities, and intimate environments will continue to succumb to the brutality and the ignorance of stigma as long as the government of the day violates and brutalises Black women for being HIV positive. To this effect, the stigma is a global phenomenon as the

international statutes and organisations have turned a blind eye to these crimes against humanity as at the center of it all, is Black women who are HIV positive.

Our healthcare system is marred by the policy inconsistencies and political indecisiveness. Most of our public healthcare institutions have poor infrastructure, shortage of medical professionals, corruption and unskilled management to ensure that we are able to effectively plan and implement HIV/AIDS strategies to deal with the epidemic.

Efforts for prevention and primary healthcare as a primary response trickle down to bare minimum as tools like PEP and PrEP are still not mainstreamed and easily accessible on demand in all clinics and hospitals across the country. This more so for girls and women between the ages 15 - 25 who are most vulnerable to new infections because of poverty, gender based violence and inability to negotiate condom use because of social factors centered around poverty.

We call on the Department of Health to implement more transformative measures in combating the AIDS epidemic, including providing meaningful social welfare benefit, ensuring a more equitable distribution of public resources and prioritising the development of healthcare infrastructure amongst the historically disadvantaged.

To fight this epidemic we must continue striving towards the attainment of economic freedom to eliminate poverty and HIV vulnerability and ensure that we provide resources that will keep people living with HIV healthy.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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