The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the HIV response
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ARE AT HIGHER RISK FROM COVID-19

People living with HIV experience more severe outcomes and have higher comorbidities from COVID-19 than people not living with HIV.

Repeated visits to HIV clinics to collect medicines put people at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Access to COVID-19 vaccines in poorer countries is lagging well behind access in the richest.

The pressure of dealing with both the HIV pandemic and the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the mental health of people living with HIV.

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Communities that had come together to respond to HIV quickly mobilized and refocused to fight COVID-19.

Communities have been key, helping many HIV programmes to rapidly rebound.

People living with HIV are a priority for vaccination: HIV is considered a high-risk condition when developing vaccination programmes.

The movement for a People's Vaccine grows stronger every day.

THE PEOPLE'S VACCINE
Accessible to all. In all countries. Free of charge.
HIV testing services have been hit—new HIV infections are not being diagnosed.

The link to HIV treatment has been broken—people who are newly diagnosed are often not starting treatment.

The global increase in viral load testing slowed considerably.

Mental health-care support services have been closed.

UNAIDS and partners reached out to people living with HIV affected by lockdowns to help them to access HIV treatment.

HIV self-testing, multimonth dispensing of medicines and the use of telehealth and virtual platforms for information and support have been accelerated, reversing many initial setbacks in HIV service provision.
The more than 11 million people in custody worldwide, and the 30 million people entering and leaving detention every year, have not been able to follow the recommended ways to prevent COVID-19.

Programmes for preventing vertical transmission, voluntary medical male circumcision, PrEP and other HIV prevention options have been impacted.

COVID-19 has put many children out of school. Since education can protect children’s health and well-being, many children, especially girls, are now at higher risk of contracting HIV.

Harm reduction access for people who use drugs has been curtailed. Where possible, prisoners have been released in order to stop transmission of HIV in jails.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights services have been scaled back. Harm reduction services have adapted and are reaching people who use drugs where they congregate and live.
VIOLENCE AGAINST VULNERABLE PEOPLE HAS INCREASED

Lockdowns have increased gender-based violence.

There have been increases in violence, harassment and arrests of sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There’s been an increase in calls to domestic violence helplines in many countries since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many communities and women’s organizations have set up refuges and are first responders to support affected women and girls.
Access to justice has been curtailed and COVID-19 has been used as an excuse to introduce laws targeting transgender people and people living with HIV.

There has been an increase in stigma and discrimination—some key populations have been unjustly blamed for transmitting COVID-19.

COVID-19 stigma has been directed at people living with HIV.

Affected communities involved in the definition, implementation and follow-up of COVID-19 programmes have helped to reduce stigma around the disease.

Communities have monitored and shone a light on human rights violations, in some cases leading to swift and effective changes in policy and practice.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION HAS WORSENED
The economic effects have been harsh.

Sex workers have lost their livelihoods and are often excluded from social protection programmes.

People living on the margins of society and working in the informal sector have often not been reached by official social protection schemes.

Food and hygiene products have been distributed to the most vulnerable.

Some countries have included sex workers and transgender people in social protection programmes.