



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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### **SA on track to eliminate malaria disease by 2028**

**Pretoria:** South Africa is on track in its commitment to achieve malaria elimination status by the year 2028, as outlined in the National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan, despite facing challenges such as heightened heatwaves exacerbated by climate change with potential to directly impact transmission and the burden disease.

Malaria elimination promises both health and economic benefits in line with the goals of the 2030 National Development Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This has potential to also benefit the Southern African countries collectively on issues of trade, tourism, health, and economic growth.

While progress has been made in reducing the burden of malaria, particularly in endemic provinces like Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal, further efforts are needed to curb local transmission.

As the country joins the global community to observe World Malaria Day on April 25 to recognize global efforts to control malaria to reduce the burden of the disease and avoid preventable deaths, the Department of Health urges all stakeholders, including communities, healthcare professionals, civil society organizations, and international partners, to collaborate in intensifying the fight against malaria, aiming to foster a healthier and more equitable world for current and future generations.

Malaria is a preventable and curable life-threatening disease transmitted by a type of female mosquito called Anopheles, remains a significant global health concern. In 2022, an estimated 249 million new cases and approximately 608 000 deaths were reported, with Sub-Saharan Africa bearing the brunt of the burden.

In South Africa, 9,795 cases, with 8% being cases reported in KwaZulu-Natal, and 106 deaths were reported in 2023, demonstrating notable progress, including the sub-national elimination of malaria in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal.

The government is committed to integrating the ethos of ensuring equal access to malaria prevention and treatment services which calls for innovation, collaboration and renewed commitment from all stakeholders to overcome the remaining challenges in the elimination of the disease. We have been implementing comprehensive strategies, including vector control measure through indoor residual spraying, early diagnosis and prompt treatment through our Environmental Health Practitioner's Test and Treat Model.

Eliminating malaria is an ambitious task that requires sustainable resources, collaboration with neighbouring countries as we do in MSASWA (Mozambique, South Africa and eSwatini) partnership, the E8 and the broader Southern Africa. South Africa is harnessing and strengthening its domestic expertise to give more impetus to these collaborations working with other global partners.

Last year South Africa was amongst the countries which received global prestigious awards from the World Health Organization for their efforts to achieve important milestone towards malaria elimination.

The 2024 World Malaria Day will be commemorated under the theme: "***Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world***," which focuses on acknowledging the varying effects of malaria on men and women, emphasizing the need to address these discrepancies in prevention and healthcare access.

Malaria symptoms include headache, fever, chills, fatigue, muscle and joint pain that occur up to three weeks after first potential exposure. The government calls on those who have travelled and experience the above-mentioned symptoms to seek early diagnosis and treatment as the disease progresses rapidly to severe illness, often with severe consequences.

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