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Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MEDIA
STATEMENT**

Department of Defence
(Defence Corporate
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MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE: LIEUTENANT GENERAL V.I. RAMLAKAN: DRAMATIC REDUCTION IN HIV PREVALENCE AMONG MEMBERS OF THE SANDF

Embargo: None

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Speculation and other malicious statements by critics of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) concerning the HIV and AIDS rate in the SANDF have been refuted by the publication of the results of the latest Clinical Records Study into the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among soldiers.

The study was done among Regular Force and the Military Skills Development System members and showed a HIV prevalence rate of 8.5 percent compared to the national prevalence rate of about 19 percent. This figure was obtained from the SANDF health status report of September 2011 and was reconfirmed in a HIV prevalence study done during August 2012.

This is in stark contrast to claims by some academics the last few years that the HIV and AIDS infection rate among soldiers is as high as 28 percent. The SANDF has always objected to the mere translation of available national statistics obtained from antenatal clinics as these are scientifically unfounded. A practice that was also questioned by independent researchers.

Another Cross Sectional Cohort Study is planned for 2013 to continue the monitoring of HIV and AIDS management in the SANDF. From the above it can be concluded that the SANDF programme on the management of HIV and AIDS is working and bearing fruit and is validation of the successes of the *Masibambisane* awareness campaign and the *Phidisa* research project.

While this study justified the stance of the SANDF, the South African Military Health Service will continue the fight against HIV and AIDS to ensure a HIV and AIDS Free Generation.

The results of this study are merely one step in that direction.

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