

Up to 4 January this year, there were a total of 27 notified cases of the lethal disease AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) in Mozambique, according to a report presented at the meeting of the Coordinating Council of the Mozambican Health Ministry. This is more than double the previous figure for AIDS cases, given in August. Then there were only 12 confirmed cases of the disease.

One case of AIDS was notified in 1986, three in 1987, ten in the first half of 1988, and 13 in the second half of 1988. Of the 27 victims, 11 have now died. Two of the victims are children, one aged six years and the other ten months. Of the notified cases, 37% (ten cases) were from Maputo city, 30% (eight cases) from the northwestern province of Tete, and 12% (three cases) from the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The remaining six cases were distributed two each in the northern province of Nampula, the central province of Zambezia and the southern province of Maputo.

The report notes that studies on blood have shown a higher degree of infection with the virus believed to cause AIDS in the north of the country rather than the south. Yet few cases of the actual disease have been notified in the north. "This leads us to believe that our capacity for clinical diagnosis is still weak," the report says.

There are now known to be two human immunodeficiency viruses, both of which can cause AIDS. HIV-1 was first discovered and seems responsible for the AIDS epidemic in the United States. The more recently discovered HIV-2 was discovered in West Africa. Mozambique is the first southern African country to report cases of AIDS due to HIV-2 infection. Of the confirmed AIDS cases, 41% (11 cases) tested positive for HIV-1, 37% (ten cases) tested positive for HIV-2, and 22% (six cases) had both viruses in their bloodstream