

## Youth to 'draw the line' against malaria

With 74% of Africans now aged under 35, the youth are powerful agents of change. They are being called upon to 'draw the line' against malaria - one of the oldest and deadliest diseases, which is stealing young futures and claiming the life of a child every two minutes.



The Draw the Line Against Malaria campaign is supported by a team of African changemakers, including Springboks captain Siya Kolisi and South African explorer Saray Khumalo. They are coming together to inspire youth across Africa to call on leaders and push for political action to end malaria within their generation.

The campaign invites people to visit the campaign website and add a personal line of Muundo art - a fresh new universal visual language made up of lines, symbols and patterns - to a growing piece of crowdsourced artwork representing a call to action to world leaders.

The mural will be presented at the Malaria & NTDs Summit on 24 June 2021 on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. The Summit is a milestone moment in the malaria fight and enabler of game changing political decisions including delivering the commitment to halve malaria across the Commonwealth by 2023.



Kolisi said, “Every child, every young person deserves the chance to step into their potential. This is a world changing campaign and we have the opportunity to protect the futures of millions of children across Africa. My message to young people is to get excited and to get involved because this is one disease we can end within a generation. Together we stand and say: Malaria, we’re too strong for you.”

Khumalo said, “Ending malaria will change the course of humanity for good, forever. I grew up living with malaria in DRC and Zambia, so I know how devastating this disease is. Malaria is a human problem that is entirely preventable so we can all be involved helping to solve it. South Africa is a great example of a country where malaria elimination is within our grasp.”

**Building a new movement against malaria**

The ‘Muundo’ language, created by Láolú Senbanjo, a global artist from Nigeria, is a beautiful, eye-catching visual representation of the actions that are needed to end malaria within a generation - from cutting-edge technology and innovations to increased investment and bold political actions.



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Senbanjo said, “Malaria is something that millions of people across Africa have to deal with. We know the amount of time malaria steals from our lives. That’s why I’m honored to be using my art, the Sacred Art of the Ori, to create the Muundo, the world’s first malaria language. It’s a fresh expression of our opportunity to end this disease. Join me, draw your own line next to mine as a symbol of support for Zero Malaria.”

**The Draw The Line campaign film**

Kolisi and Khumalo are joined by a host of high-level talent to support the campaign, including Eliud Kipchoge, Kenyan athlete, Olympic gold-medallist and marathon world record-holder; Dr Omotola J Ekeinde, Nigerian actress and philanthropist; Osas Ighodaro, Nigerian-American actress and producer; Láolú Senbanjo, Nigerian artist; and Sherrie

Silver, award-winning Rwandan British choreographer.

Acclaimed Nigerian music video director Meji Alabi directed the campaign film, where the stars are joined by Láolú Senbanjo, and a team of malaria community champions who feature in different scenes to tell the human story of malaria and its devastating impact it has on their education, employment, health and prospects.

## **2021 – a key year for malaria**

Two decades of partnership and global commitment have led to transformative progress against malaria, preventing 1.5bn cases, cutting deaths by more than 60% and saving more than 7.6m lives since 2000. This represents millions of children who have grown up to lead happy and productive lives. At the beginning of 2020, mortality rates were at the lowest point ever, but the world has changed since then.

A remarkable collective effort across Africa has enabled countries to fight back, with more than 90% of malaria prevention campaigns moving forward in 2020 without major delay, but the rapid spread of Covid-19 has further threatened to disrupt malaria progress. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is warning that disruption to malaria diagnosis and treatment caused by Covid-19 could lead to thousands of additional deaths.

Even with the rampant spread of Covid-19 locally and globally, the world still needs to keep up the vital effort to fight malaria. To do this, countries require stronger health systems better prepared to fight Covid-19 and future diseases.



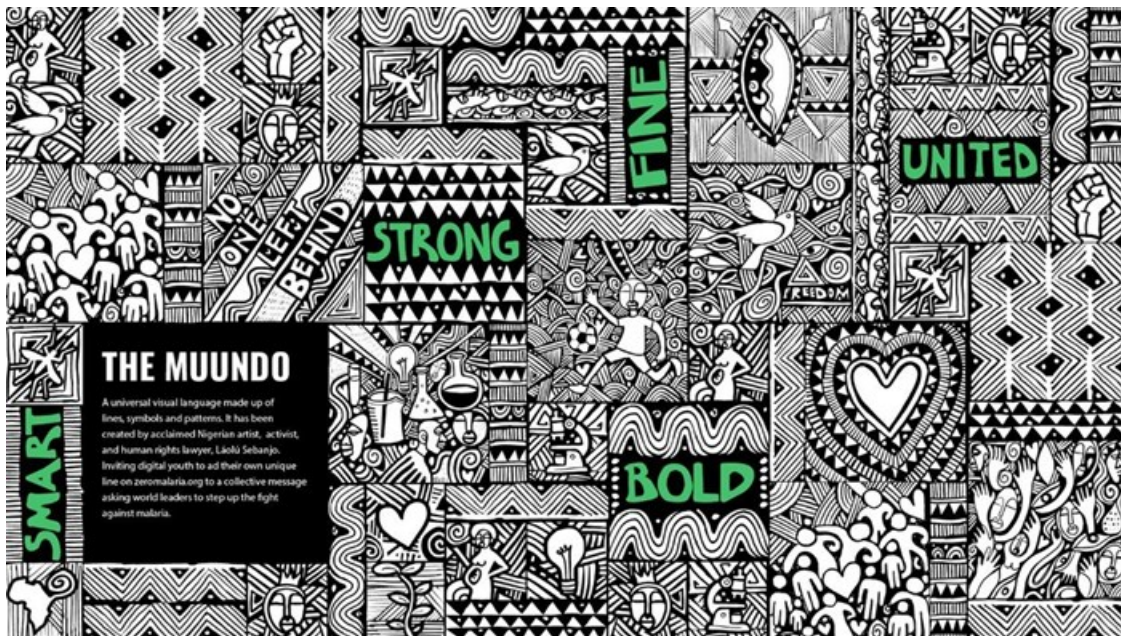
South Africa's long history of effective malaria control has led to a low incidence rate, making elimination a feasible prospect. In 2009, South Africa became one of the Elimination Eight countries. This is a group of nations also including Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe - seeking to eliminate malaria by 2030. In 2012, the South African government set the goal of eliminating malaria from the country by 2023.

Sherwin Charles is the co-founder of Goodbye Malaria, a South African-born social benefit organisation dedicated to fighting malaria in Mozambique, South Africa and eSwatini. Charles said, "For us, the line has always been zero, hence our name. But if we really want to say 'goodbye malaria' then we are going to need to work together as one continent and one world. Although our Indoor Residual spray programmes have protected over 2m lives this past spray season in the Mosaswa (Mozambique, South Africa, Eswatini) region, more needs to be done if we truly want to draw the line at zero."

## Looking towards a malaria-free future

Africa is the continent that shoulders the greatest burden of malaria globally, with children under five across Sub-Saharan Africa – our future youth – predominantly falling victim to this deadly disease. According to the latest WHO World Malaria Report 2019, 94% (215m) of the global 229m malaria cases - and 94% (384,000) of the 409,000 global malaria-related deaths - reported were from the African continent.

Experts convened by the WHO agree that malaria eradication is likely to save millions of lives and billions of dollars.



In 2019, The Lancet Commission on malaria eradication – made up of leading scientists from around the world – found that if we focus efforts on strengthening leadership, increasing investment, prioritising research and innovation, including the development of new tools, and implementing smart, data driven programmes, ending malaria is possible within a generation. Decisions made now by global political leaders – backed by strong public support - will determine this trajectory.

Already, more countries than ever are within reach of elimination, including South Africa, with Algeria and Argentina both certified malaria-free in 2019, but every country should be able to reap the benefits of zero malaria. We must act now to create a fairer future that leaves no one behind.

Go to the Zero Malaria website [here](https://www.zeromalaria.org) for more information.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>