

WHAT THE DATA TELL US: Projections for the HIV epidemic in eastern Europe and central Asia in 2030

© Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2025

Some rights reserved. This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/>).

Under the terms of this licence, you may copy, redistribute and adapt the work for non-commercial purposes, provided the work is appropriately cited, as indicated below. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that UNAIDS endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the UNAIDS logo is not permitted. If you adapt the work, then you must license your work under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If you create a translation of this work, you should add the following disclaimer along with the suggested citation: "This translation was not created by UNAIDS. UNAIDS is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original English edition shall be the binding and authentic edition".

Any mediation relating to disputes arising under the licence shall be conducted in accordance with the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization (<http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules>).

Suggested citation. The urgency of now: AIDS at a crossroads. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2024. Licence: [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/).

Third-party materials. If you wish to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, it is your responsibility to determine whether permission is needed for that reuse and to obtain permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

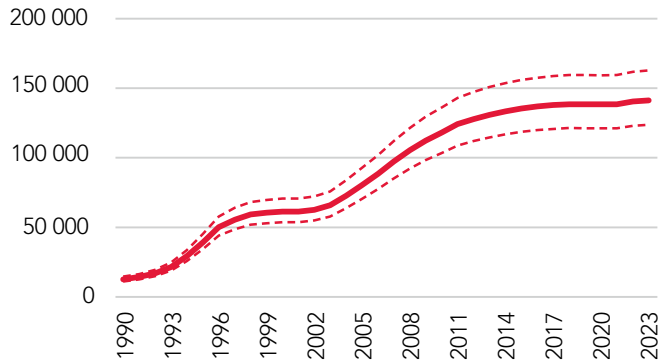
The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNAIDS concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by UNAIDS in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by UNAIDS to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall UNAIDS be liable for damages arising from its use.

Where are we now?

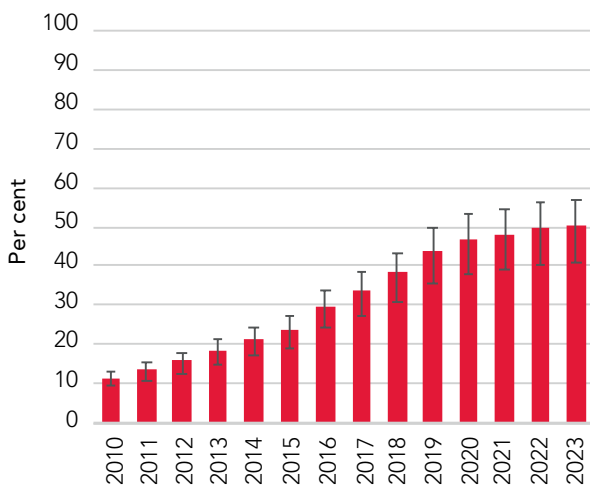
Estimated number of new HIV infections, 1990–2023



New HIV infections are continuing to increase in eastern Europe and central Asia, reaching an estimated 140 000 (120 000–160 000) in 2023, a 20% increase since 2010. Antiretroviral treatment coverage among people living with HIV reached only 50% (41–57%) in 2023, far below the treatment targets set for 2025.¹

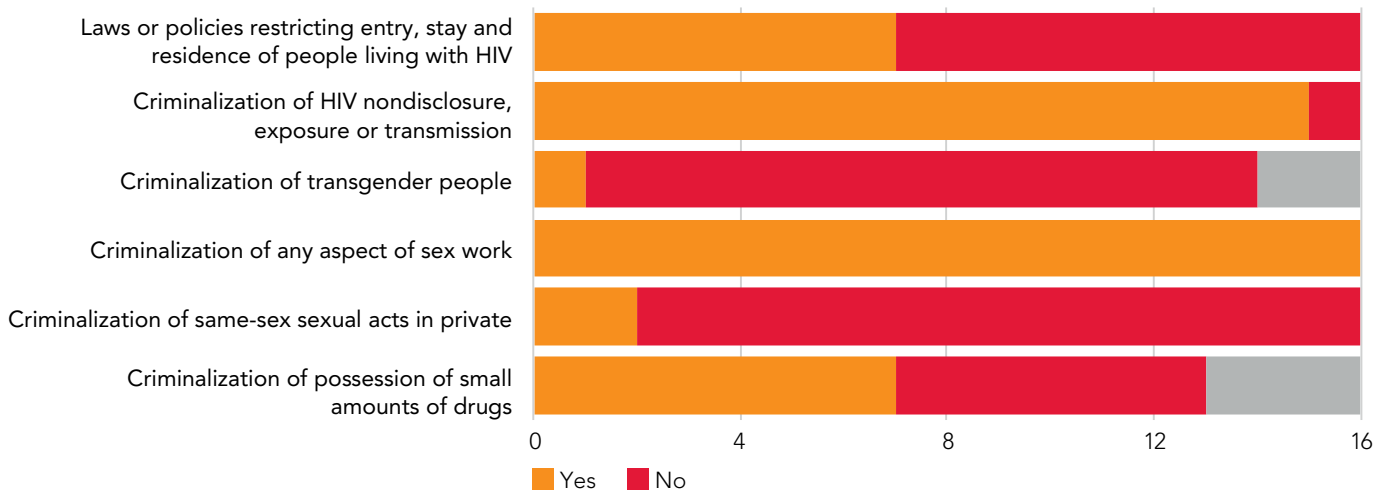
Out of 16 countries in the region, all 16 still criminalize sex work, 15 criminalize HIV non-disclosure, exposure or transmission based on either HIV-specific or general criminal laws, 7 criminalize possession of small amounts of drugs, 2 countries criminalize same-sex sexual acts, and 7 have laws or policies restricting the entry, stay and residence of people living with HIV. These persisting discriminatory and punitive laws expose key populations and vulnerable communities to stigma, discrimination and violence and lead to poor health outcomes. Such patterns of exclusion remain widespread, with 48% of sex workers in Azerbaijan and 35% in Kyrgyzstan; 28% of gay men and other men who have sex with men in Azerbaijan and 21% in Georgia; 40% of people who inject drugs in Armenia; and 91% of transgender people in Azerbaijan and 89% in Armenia reported experiencing stigma and discrimination in the past six months.

Treatment coverage, 2010–2023



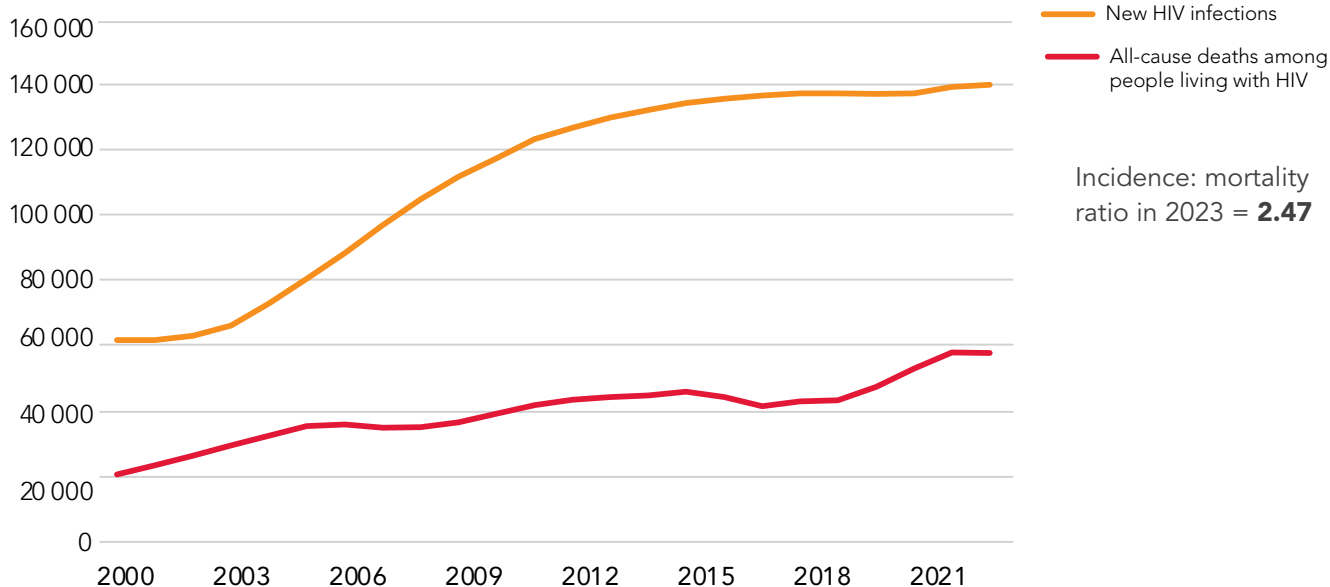
¹ Note: the 2025 targets are for 95% of people living with HIV to know their HIV status, 95% of these people to be receiving HIV treatment, and 95% of these people to have viral suppression. For further explanation see https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/progress-towards-95-95-95_en.pdf

Number of countries with HIV-related discriminatory and punitive laws, EECA, 2024



What factors might contribute to epidemic control?

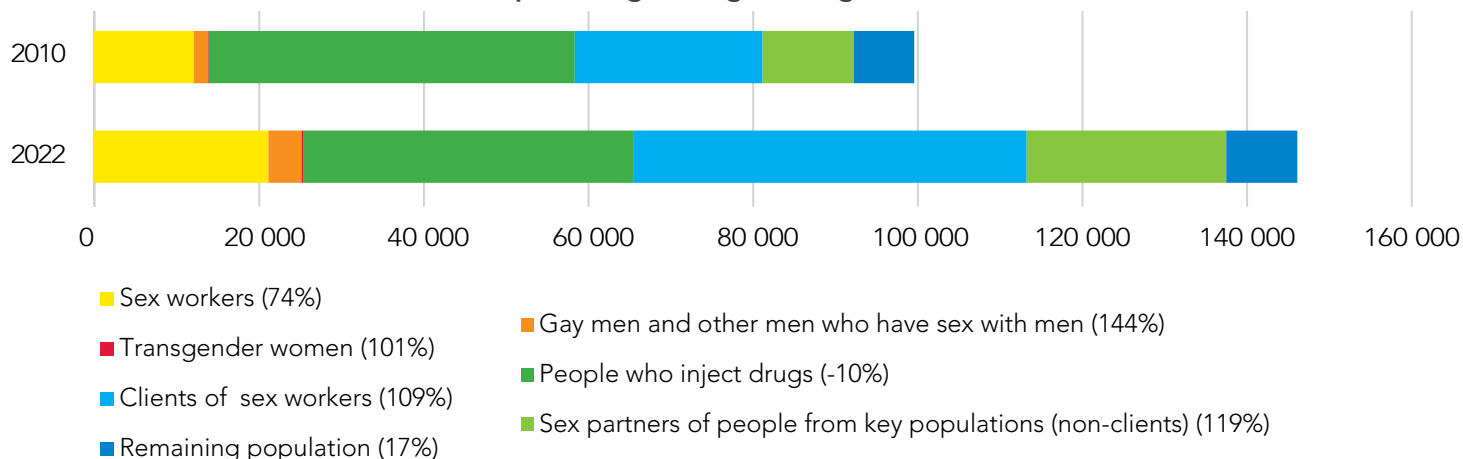
Estimated HIV incidence to mortality ratio, 2000–2023



An estimated incidence:mortality ratio (IMR) of 2.47, which is substantially above the benchmark of 1, indicates that the population of people living with HIV in the region is increasing as new infections are significantly outpacing deaths. This ratio underscores the need to upscale prevention interventions including ensuring people living with HIV receive treatment. By comparison, when the IMR value is less than 1, the size of the population living with HIV decreases, contracting the epidemic and lowering costs of antiretroviral therapy and services. An incidence:mortality ratio can reach the goal of being lower than one if mortality is very high. For this reason the incidence:mortality ratio should be interpreted with caution when treatment coverage (which determines mortality) is low as is the case in this region.²

Prevention interventions are particularly important among people from key populations and their sex partners who accounted for 94% of new HIV infections in 2022. This is reflected in the numbers of new HIV infections which increased by 144% among gay men and other men who have sex with men, by 101% among transgender women, and by 74% and 109% among sex workers and their clients, respectively.

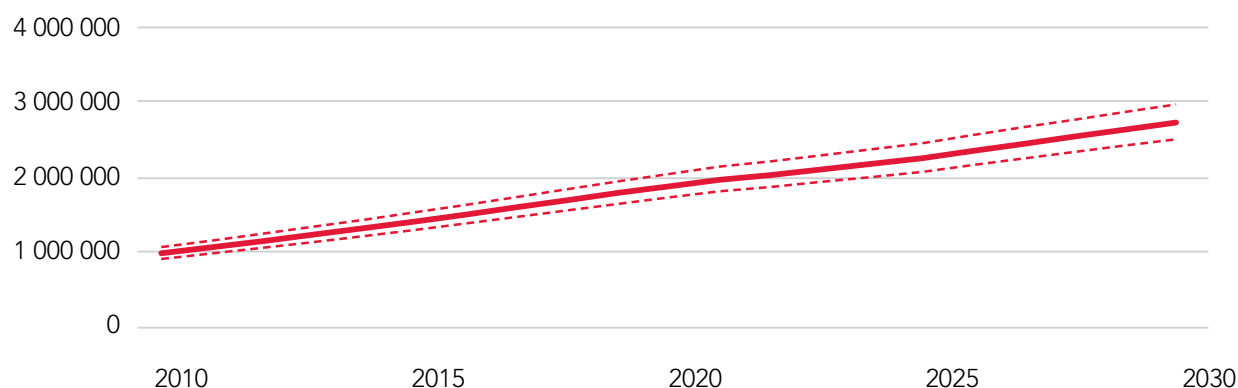
Distribution of new HIV infections and percentage change among adults, 2010 and 2022



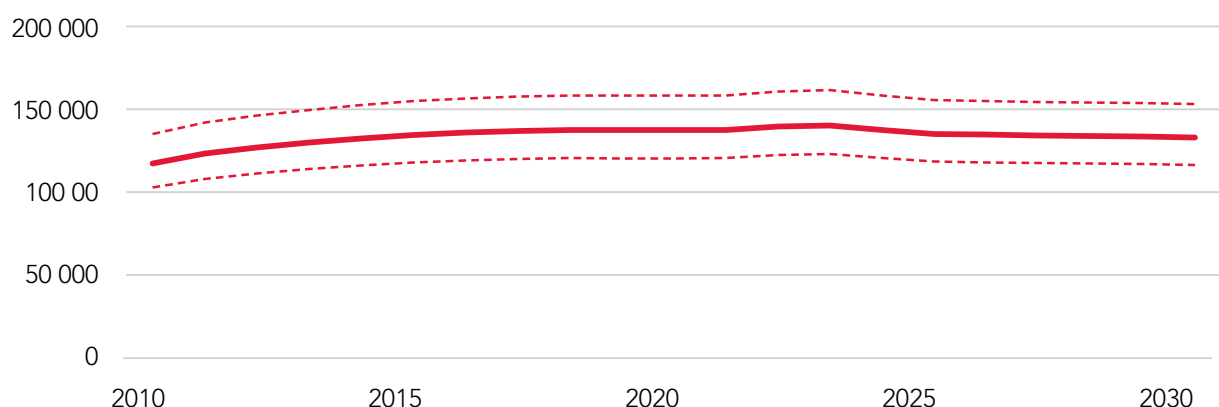
2 See: Ghys PD, Williams BG, Over M, Hallett TB, Godfrey-Faussett P (2018) Epidemiological metrics and benchmarks for a transition in the HIV epidemic. PLoS Med 15(10): e1002678. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002678>

What is projected to happen in the future if coverage remains at 2023 level for treatment and prevention?

Projections of numbers of people living with HIV by 2030

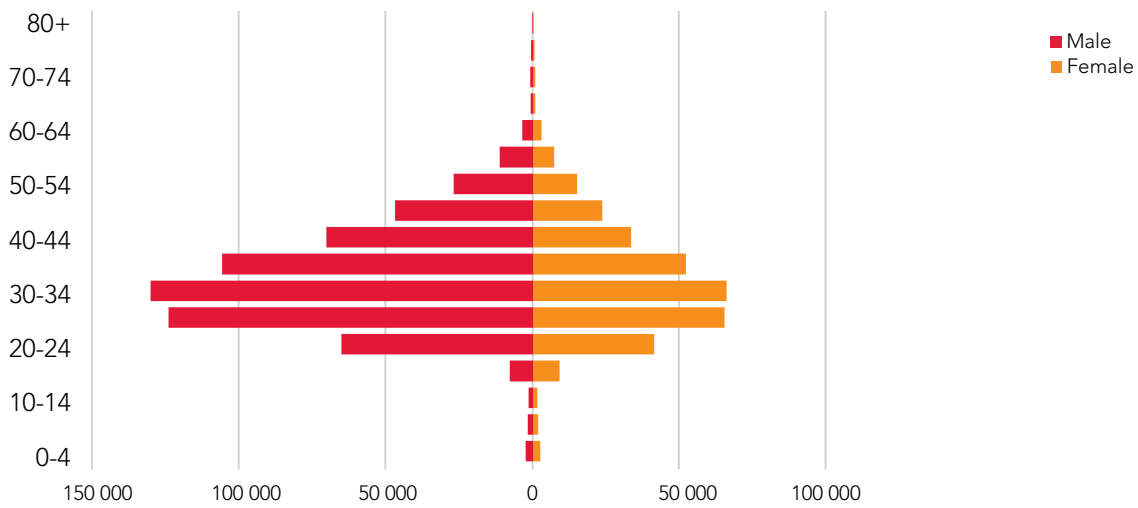


Projections of numbers of new HIV infections by 2030

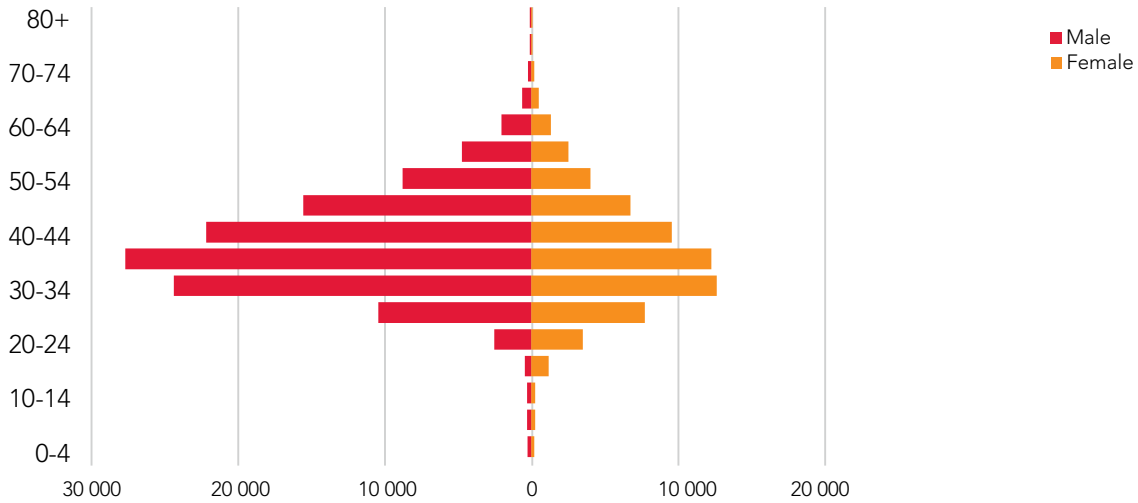


By 2030, without accelerated scale-up of prevention and treatment coverage, there may be an estimated 130 000 new HIV infections and 2.7 million people living with HIV in eastern Europe and central Asia. The majority of people living with HIV is projected to remain in the 30–59 age group. This group accounted for 64% of all people living with HIV in 2010, 82% in 2020, and is projected to account for 84% in 2030. Gender disparity among people living with HIV is projected to persist, with boys and men making up 67% of all people living with HIV in 2030.

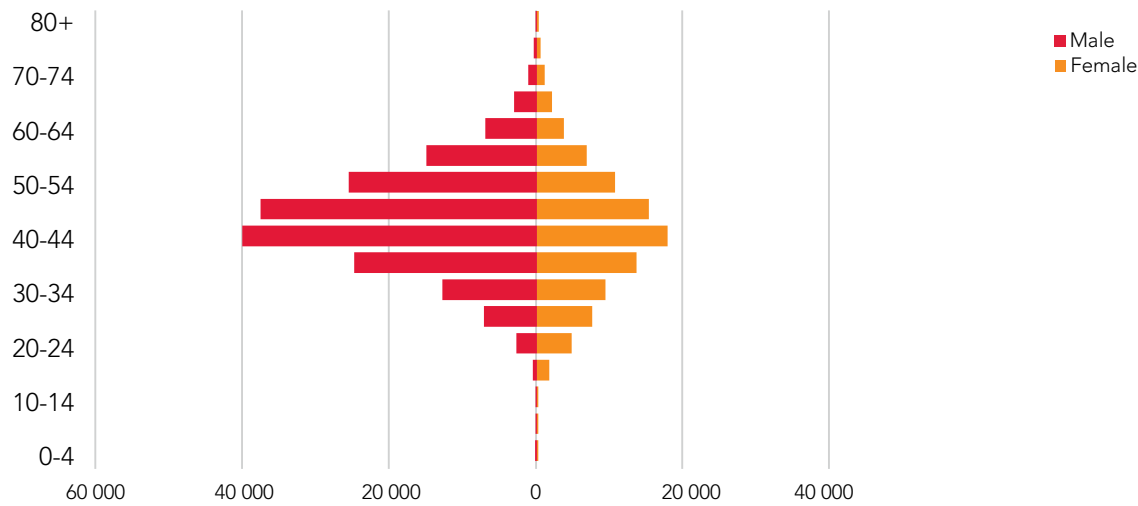
Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2010



Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2020



Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2030



Bibliography

Global AIDS Monitoring, 2020–2024 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>)

Korenromp EL, Sabin K, Stover J, Brown T, Johnson LF, Martin-Hughes R, et al. New HIV infections among key populations and their partners in 2010 and 2022, by world region: a multisources estimation. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr.* 2024;95(1S):e34–e45. doi:10.1097/QAI.0000000000003340.

National commitments and policy instrument 2017–2024 supplemented by additional sources, Geneva: UNAIDS; 2024 (<http://lawsandpolicies.unaids.org/>).

UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2024. Geneva: UNAIDS; 2024 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>).

UNAIDS Methods for deriving HIV estimates, 2024; https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2024-unaids-global-aids-update-annex2-methods_en.pdf

UNAIDS
Joint United Nations
Programme on HIV/AIDS

20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

+41 22 595 59 92

unaids.org