

**RWANDA**

**DHAPP**

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS  
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS  
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN  
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND BEYOND

## **WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Country Statistics**

Despite international assistance and political reforms, including its first local elections in March 1999 and first post-genocide presidential and legislative elections in September 2003, Rwanda continues to struggle with investment and agricultural output, and complicated ethnic reconciliation. The most densely populated country in Africa, Rwanda's population is estimated to be 8.6 million people, with an average life expectancy of 47.3 years. Kinyarwanda is the official language of Rwanda, which has an estimated literacy rate of 70.4%, evenly distributed between men and women. Rwanda is a poor rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in agriculture. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$1,500, with 60% of Rwandans living below the poverty line.

#### **HIV/AIDS Statistics**

The HIV prevalence rate in Rwanda's general population is estimated at 3.1%, a decline from 2 years ago. Rwanda has approximately 190,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Rwandan Defense Force (RDF) is estimated at approximately 70,000. 2.9% of Rwanda allocates 2.9% of the GDP for military expenditures. No current prevalence data are available for the RDF.

### **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

#### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

DHAPP staff members provided technical assistance to the RDF during an in-country visit in the summer of 2006. The purpose of the trip included review, assistance, and preparation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Country Operational Plan (COP) for fiscal year 2007, as well as military-specific planning and technical assistance to the RDF and US Embassy personnel. DHAPP staff members represent the RDF as members of the PEPFAR Core Team, and have been involved in every level of country planning, ensuring that RDF programs are adequately addressed.



### Proposed Future Activities

In addition to the ongoing successful efforts of in-country PEPFAR partner Population Services International (PSI) in RDF prevention program implementation, DHAPP collaborated with Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science Center for AIDS Research, Education and Services (Drew CARES) to expand their work into Rwanda. Drew CARES began initial work with the RDF in HIV-related palliative care and treatment services, and will be expanding to provide counseling and testing (CT) implementation for the RDF. PSI and Drew CARES, on behalf of the RDF, submitted proposals for expansions of their programs to the Rwanda country team, which were included in the FY07 COP.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### Prevention

During FY06, PSI continued to provide exceptional results in its work with the RDF, specifically in prevention. During the year, RDF troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages as part of a large in-country PSI prevention effort, and their numbers were reported as part of the larger program (100,946 individuals trained). Nine hundred and two others were trained in the provision of those messages, including RDF personnel, and 250 condom service outlets were maintained, including those that serve the RDF.

### Care

Three service outlets provided HIV-related palliative care to military members and their families. During the year, 1202 RDF members were provided with HIV-related palliative care (811 men, 391 women), and another 126 individuals were trained in the provision of that care. Six CT centers provided HIV testing for RDF personnel, again monitored as part of the larger PSI program. During FY06, 20,147 individuals were tested for HIV and received their results, including RDF members and their dependents. Nineteen individuals received CT training, including RDF personnel.



### Treatment

Drew CARES acted as the implementing agent on behalf of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for the RDF. During FY06, one (1) outlet provided ART services to RDF personnel and their families. Twenty-five service members or dependents were newly started on ART during the reporting period. 1078 military members or families were established on ART by the end of the fiscal year (737 men, 304 women, 20 boys, 17 girls). Forty-two military health workers were trained in the provision of ART.