



**THE  
PEOPLE'S  
VACCINE**

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**People's Vaccine Alliance Africa  
Civil Society Meeting  
August 31, 2021**

Hosted by the [African Alliance](#)

## Meeting Objectives

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As Coordinators of the People's Vaccine Alliance in Africa, the African Alliance seeks to create a space where civil society representatives from around the continent can:

- receive updates on the PVA's global efforts,
- contribute to the PVA's activities and strategies,
- amplify African voices within the PVA,
- share information with each other on activities, challenges, and successes,
- develop advocacy strategies and activities together, and
- work towards improving communication and coordination related to African vaccine access and equity efforts.

## Participants (15 individuals representing 10 organizations)

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### African Organizations

- African Alliance (2 participants)
- African Health Research Institute (1 participant)
- Desmond Tutu Health Foundation (1 participant)
- South African National AIDS Council Civil Society Forum (2 participants)

### International Organizations

- ActionAid International (4 participants)
- Amnesty International (1 participant)
- Christian Aid (1 participant)
- Frontline AIDS (1 participant)

## Meeting Agenda & Key Points

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**Agenda Item 1:** Presentation by Marlise Richter ([Health Justice Initiative](#)) regarding Johnson & Johnson story (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 11:14)

Marlise Richter reviewed the background of the story that broke in the New York Times on August 17, revealing the contract between Johnson and Johnson and the South African government, and confirming that the majority of vaccines filled and finished at Aspen Pharmacare in South Africa are being exported to Europe. She talked about why this was an important story to South Africa specifically and Africa as a whole (in a period when vaccines are lacking on the continent) and suggested why PVA Africa should be interested and what some potential advocacy asks could be.

Marcia Vilakazi ([SANACCSE](#)) (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 22:38) asks about accountability and how to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for their actions. Marlise responds that holding pharmaceutical companies is quite difficult, and that targeting their shareholders is an effective tactic. Marlise highlights that it is equally as important (and perhaps easier) to hold our local governments accountable when it comes to their relationship with pharmaceutical companies.

Maaza Seyoum ([African Alliance](#)) asks if our advocacy focus should be solely on Johnson and Johnson or if accountability should also be placed at the hands of Aspen Pharmacare. Marlise acknowledges that Aspen is a “smaller fish” in the matter but urges us to hold them accountable for their actions, regardless, especially since they have strong ties to the African continent.

Robert Mwanyumba ([Christian Aid Kenya](#)) (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 27:55) addresses the circulating narrative that Aspen is simply a “finisher” of the vaccine rather than an active participant in the exodus of vaccines from the African continent. Robert urges us to think about how to strengthen the agency of the African continent during these conversations.

Marlise responds that the details of the “fill and finish” model should be explored more and that knowledge for the full manufacturing of vaccines needs to be shared with African vaccine manufacturers.

Buba Khan ([ActionAid](#)) asks Marlise if there are any suggested paths of action to hold pharmaceutical companies and government agencies accountable for this scandal.

Marlise proposes the following:

- Joining already existing accountability campaigns
- Putting pressure on all domestic governments if they have contracts with pharmaceutical companies
- Pushing collectives like COVAX, the African Union, and AVATT to say that it is to the benefit of the people on the African continent to have free access to these contracts

Marlise commits to sharing relevant links related to this story as well as HJI's background reading.

**Agenda Item 2:** Update from the [People's Vaccine Alliance Global](#) (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 40:37)

Maaza gave a presentation on updates from The People's Vaccine Alliance, providing details on:

- What the Alliance stands for,
- the Alliance's [5 demands](#),
- how the Alliance works,
- what the current state of play is, and
- the Alliance's list of strategic priorities

Maaza also provides an overview of the PVA's Week of Action plans. Maaza explains that the aim of the Week of Action (coming up in mid-September) is to “shame leaders (particularly Biden and Merkel) into action by focusing on the human cost of the Pandemic.”

Maaza presents PVA's plans for the Week of Action:

- Participating in German “Make Them Sign” protest
- Writing and gathering signatures for a letter from heads of state and Nobel laureates - targeted towards three party leaders who are running for the upcoming German election - urging them to support of TRIPS Waiver

- Organizing interviews between German media and spokespeople (including hopefully some in African countries)
- Participating in [Health GAP's](#) Vaccine Apartheid March

Maaza reminds the group of the PVA's interest in continuing to highlight stories and voices from the Global South, not just for the Week of Action, but in general.

Buba Khan (SEE TRANSCRIPT 57:43) introduces ActionAid's People's Heroes campaign.

- Maaza will send Buba the invite to the next PVA Storytelling Group so he or someone else from Action Aid can join and explore including this initiative in the stories that are being told either during the upcoming Week of Action or other opportunities.

Ideas for Week of Action or other upcoming actions:

- Open letter to African leaders about accountability. This group agrees that there is real interest in pivoting attention to African leaders. Especially following the discussion from Marlise earlier about the lack of transparency of contracts across the continent (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 33:36)
  - The group agrees that the open letter to African leaders is a great idea and should be pursued.
- Synchronized delivery of letters to German and US embassies across African continent?
- Creative photo/media stunt in front of German embassies or Goethe Institute (keeping security restrictions in mind)
  - Robert (Cristian Aid) will follow-up on that for Nairobi and revert.
- The group will continue
- Digital memorial board for victims of COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The group likes this idea. It is reminiscent of the AIDS quilt.
  - Maaza will suggest this idea to the PVA Storytelling Group

**Agenda Item 3:** Updates from meeting participants + key dates (SEE TRANSCRIPT AS OF 1:17:33)

- German elections: September 26
- GIMAC Conference (AU Summit): October 11-12
  - Buba will see if he can get a slot there for PVA Africa.
- World Bank Annual Meetings October 15-17
- G20 Meeting: October 30-31
- One year anniversary of Ensemble (J&J) trial launch in Sa: Nov 6
- COP26 Glasgow: October 31-November 12
- World AIDS Day: December 1
- [WTO Ministerial Conference](#): November 30- December 3
- ICASA Conference: December 6-11
- One-year anniversary of first COVID-19 vaccine being administered: Dec 8

Closing remarks by Maaza: Participants are encouraged to reach out to Maaza if they would like to join the PVA Africa WhatsApp group, would like to officially join the larger PVA or have any questions ([maaza@africanalliance.org.za](mailto:maaza@africanalliance.org.za)).

## **Appendices**

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[PVA Presentation](#)

[Meeting Transcript](#)

[Meeting Recording \(audio\)](#)

[Meeting Recording \(video\)](#)