Two SOUTHERN African infectious diseases epidemiologists have been named as finalists for the prestigious Canadian Gairdner Awards for their research contributions in global health research.

For the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Sibongiseni Dhlakama and Quainthuab Abdool Karim, respectively, were named as finalists for the Aga Khan John Dicks-Canada Global Health awards.

"During these challenging times, we must work together to celebrate scientists and innovators from around the world and those who are making incredible efforts to conduct research that could save lives," the organizers said.

The Aga Khan John Dicks-Canada Global Health awards recognize and celebrate the work of scientists who have made significant contributions to global health research.

The finalists were chosen by an independent panel of experts.

Dhlakama and Abdool Karim were among the finalists for their research contributions to the understanding and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

"Their work has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of the epidemiology and transmission of HIV/AIDS, and their contributions have had a significant impact on global health policy and practice," the organizers said.

In a statement, Dhlakama said the recognition "is a testament to the remarkable work of all our colleagues in the field who are dedicated to improving health outcomes around the world."

Abdool Karim, who is also the director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa), added that the recognition "is a source of great pride for all of us who work in the field of global health, and it is a reminder of the importance of continued investment in research and development to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS."