

HEALTH

No easy way to cure HIV, says expert

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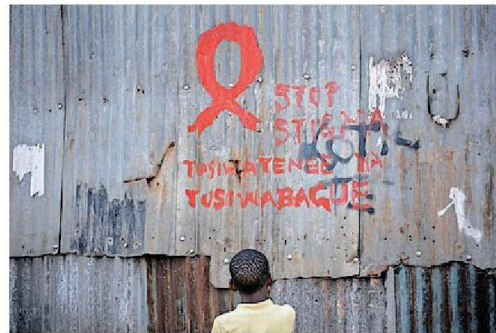
THE director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa, Professor Salim Abdool Karim, says there is no medical definition for HIV cure.

According to the SABC, this follows a report in the Journal Nature Medicine that revealed a 53-year-old man in Germany, often referred to as the “Berlin patient”, had become the third person to be cured of HIV after getting a stem cell transplant, and discussions have since erupted on the subject.

Bone marrow transplants cured two patient previously and researchers used a cutting-edge stem cell transplant technique that they believe will increase the number of individuals who could benefit from a similar treatment.

Karim said a more practical definition was used in the matter and the patient discontinued HIV antiretroviral treatment in 2018.

“We use a more practical definition that is something that we refer to as functionally cured. In other words, every attempt we make to try and find



MILLIONS of murals around the world call for an end to HIV/Aids. | DAI KUROKAWA EPA

the virus in a person, we can't find it.

“We look for it for at least three years and after three years if we can't find it, we say the person is cured.

“We don't know it might still be hiding somewhere, dormant, and may pitch up several years later. But functionally cured is a good way to move forward,” said Karim.

He further said that the apparent cure represented a small step in curing the HIV and it wasn't a major advance in what it presented, because it showed a technology that is experimental and it is something that cannot easily be made available.