



May 23, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

**Dr Sikhulile Moyo named to TIME's annual TIME100 list of the  
100 most influential people in the world**

GABORONE, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 - TIME has named Dr Sikhulile Moyo to the 2022 TIME100, its annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. Dr. Moyo is the Research Laboratory Director at the Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership (BHP), a health research and training collaboration established in 1996 between the Government of Botswana and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Moyo (at BHP) and Professor Tulio de Oliveira (at the Stellenbosch University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal) and their colleagues are jointly credited with the discovery of the B.1.1.529 SARS-CoV-2 variant, subsequently named Omicron by the World Health Organization. Omicron and its sub variants have become the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variants causing COVID-19 globally.

“This discovery demonstrates the potential to leverage existing local human and infrastructural capacity to participate in cutting-edge scientific pursuits for the benefit of local, regional, and global scientific public health advances,” said Dr Joseph Makhema, Chief Executive Officer of the BHP.

“We regard this recognition of one of our own, as a vote of confidence in the quality of scientific expertise that reside in our country. It is a true demonstration that Botswana can be counted amongst a league of countries that have developed the requisite scientific knowledge and infrastructure that can help us and the world, to respond to current and future health challenges,” said Ms Grace Muzila, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Moyo has served as Co-Scientific Scientist to the Botswana Presidential COVID-19 Task Force, working closely with the National Public Health Laboratory and Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) on the COVID-19 response.

“It is gratifying to see the scientific contribution made by Dr. Moyo recognized in this manner,” said Dr. Roger Shapiro, Associate Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at HSPH and Chair of the Board of Directors of BHP. “He provided an early warning to the world about Omicron, and we all owe a debt to him and to his team

Private Bag BO 320  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Phone: +267 267 3902671  
Fax: +267 3901284  
Website: [www.bhp.org.bw](http://www.bhp.org.bw)

of dedicated scientists in Botswana.” Dr. Shahin Lockman (at HSPH, BHP and Brigham and Women’s Hospital), adds, “the early discovery of the Omicron variant by Dr. Moyo and colleagues is one example of the critical importance of sustained support of African scientists”.

The TIME100 list, now in its nineteenth year, recognizes the impact, innovation, and achievement of the world’s most influential individuals. The full list and related tributes will appear in the June 6 / June 13 double issue of TIME, available now at [time.com/time100](https://time.com/time100) and on newsstands on Friday, May 27.

Read more: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35042229/>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/botswana-researcher-who-sequenced-omicron-urges-more-genomic-surveillance-vaccinations-in-africa/>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/botswana-lab-that-identified-omicron-is-model-for-global-health-goals/>

<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/12/6/harvard-botswana-lab-omicron/>

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/05/08/build-scientific-talent-global-south-prevent-future-public-health-crises/>

## **About BHP**

Established in 1996 as a collaboration between Botswana’s Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH), BHP is a world-renowned institution whose mission is to fight HIV/AIDS and emerging public health challenges through innovative research, education, and capacity building that impact policy and practice.

For more information, contact:

Tapela Morapedi  
Communications Coordinator  
Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership  
Princess Marina Hospital  
Plot No. 1836, Northring Road, Gaborone, Botswana  
Tel: +267 3902671 Mobile: 76184238  
Email: [tmorapedi@bhp.org.bw](mailto:tmorapedi@bhp.org.bw)  
Website: <https://bhp.org.bw/>

Follow [@TIME](#) for updates about the list on Twitter and Instagram and at [Facebook.com/TIME](https://www.facebook.com/TIME).

Private Bag BO 320  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Phone: +267 267 3902671  
Fax: +267 3901284  
Website: [www.bhp.org.bw](http://www.bhp.org.bw)