

PETITION

We have heard, seen, experienced and documented widespread human rights abuses of people who use drugs. Accounts illustrate that drug users have experienced beating, chaining, caging, and other abuses while in state custody for drug "rehabilitation" and "treatment". Until now, the actions of the United Nations agencies and bilateral donors, particularly the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, have been woefully inadequate in addressing the deadly conflict between public health and law enforcement approaches to drug use.

Numerous and recent reports from around the world have detailed widespread abuse of drug users seeking treatment for addiction to drugs. Most international organizations responsible for monitoring drug policy, including UN agencies, have acknowledged these abuses. We, drug users and drug user advocates, present the following demands to the United Nations:

1. All UN agencies and bilateral donors must immediately encourage governments to repeal laws that criminalize people who use drugs, and to promote a rights- and health-based approach in addressing drug-related problems;
2. UN agencies and bilateral donors must immediately encourage governments to include people who use drugs in a process of developing, implementing and evaluating evidence-based drug treatment policies and programs that include a comprehensive, rights-based harm reduction approach;
3. All UN agencies and bilateral donors must immediately denounce cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of people who use drugs, as well as other human rights violations against them,
3. All UN agencies and bilateral donors must encourage governments to repeal repressive drug policies that encourage violations of human rights, and demand governments take action against individuals and agencies guilty of rights violations.
3. WHO in collaboration with UNODC, must commission a health impact assessment of the global war on drugs, or in particularly heavily-affected countries.
4. All UN agencies and bilateral donors must include people who use drugs in their agency strategic planning process and disseminate this plan to ensure transparency and accountability.

The UN, through the Office of Drugs and Crime and other bilateral donors, must address the following areas in their communications with local country governments:

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

- Train and sensitize all levels of police, particularly police on the street, on harm reduction principles and approaches;
- Law enforcement officials who harass, abuse, or use torture against people who use drugs or commit any other violation must be held accountable and brought to justice.
- Rather than arresting drug users or confiscating their injecting equipment, police should warn and refer drug users to appropriate health and social services, including housing, that implement a harm reduction approach.
- Law enforcement must work collaboratively, integrating social services that drug users access, across all levels of law enforcement, to ensure that policies are widely understood and respected.

COMBAT STIGMA

- Sensitizing the general public to the value of harm reduction approaches to decrease societal stigma/discrimination against people who use drugs
- Create awareness among the general public about drug users' human rights and the need for humane drug treatment.
- Implement WHO guidelines for medical providers working with drug users.

IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN PRISONS, PRE-TRIAL DETENTION AND OTHER CLOSED SETTINGS INCLUDING DRUG REHABILITATION CENTERS

- Introduce harm reduction services including syringe exchange programs and condoms and ensure access for healthcare, including HIV treatment, for all drug users in prison settings.
- Ensure that prisons provide medication assisted treatment, including maintenance therapy and detoxification.
- Provide proper linkages with prevention and treatment services after drug users are released from prisons.
- All UN agencies and WHO, should include guidelines and technical assistance for overdose prevention