

To:

Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, UNAIDS

Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP

CC:

Rangaiyan Gurumurthy, Regional MENA director, UNAIDS

Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director, HIV, Health and Development, UNDP

Dear Ms. Byanyima and Mr. Steiner,

We write to alert you to an urgent situation that requires your immediate attention. [Recent Human Rights Watch research](#) has documented that United Arab Emirates (UAE) prison authorities are denying foreign prisoners living with HIV in some UAE prisons regular and uninterrupted access to lifesaving antiretroviral treatment. Human Rights Watch also found that prison authorities in al-Awir central prison and al-Wathba central prison have segregated detainees living with HIV from other prisoners and systematically discriminated against them.

The research, based upon interviews with former prisoners and family members of prisoners, found while foreign prisoners in one UAE prison are getting regularly tested for HIV, prison authorities are denying them HIV treatment for weeks or months on end, and that despite some prisoners' worsening health conditions, including some whose test results have displayed a dangerously low count of CD4 cells, prison authorities continue to deny them access to critical medical care and attention. One former foreign prisoner in the UAE was reportedly denied HIV treatment throughout his year-long detention in both al-Awir and al-Sadr prisons.

The segregation of prisoners living with HIV from the rest of the prison population based on their HIV status is also harmful and in violation of international guidelines and best practice for managing HIV in prisons.

As a UN member state, the UAE committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, and in doing so committed to ending HIV by 2030, to combating hepatitis, to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and to achieving "zero discrimination" against people living with HIV.

We are calling on you to intervene to ensure that all prisoners in UAE custody have access to appropriate HIV prevention, treatment and care, and to call publicly for UAE to allow

independent international monitors to enter the country and regularly monitor prison and detention facilities, including by conducting private visits with prisoners.

Sincerely,

1. Action against AIDS Germany
2. Action for Health Initiatives (ACHIEVE), Inc
3. Action Hepatitis Canada
4. ACT! AP Secretariat - Bangkok, Thailand
5. APCASO - Bangkok, Thailand
6. AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa
7. Americas TB Coalition
8. BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, Germany
9. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
10. Canadian Treatment Action Council
11. Canadian AIDS Society
12. CATIE, Canada's source for HIV and hepatitis C information
13. Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance (CHREAA), Malawi
14. Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Uganda
15. Deutsches Medikamenten-Hilfswerk action medeor e.V. (German Medical Aid Organization)
16. Development for Peace Education in Lesotho
17. Empower India, India
18. European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG)
19. Global Asthma Community Forum
20. Human Rights Watch
21. Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+).
22. Medical IMPACT
23. MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health & Rights
24. Kenya Sex workers Alliance (KESWA)
25. Partners In Health
26. Phelisanang Bophelong(PB), Lesotho
27. Radanar Ayar Association, Myanmar
28. Society for Conservation & Sustainability of Energy & Environment in Nigeria (SOCSEEN)
29. Solidarité pour Femmes et Enfants Vulnérables (SOLFEV), Cote d'Ivoire
30. Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (TNW+)
31. TB HIV Care, South Africa

32. TB Proof, South Africa
33. Treatment Action Group
34. Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign (TALC) – Zambia
35. U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus
36. Dr Uzo Adirieje Foundation (DUZAFOUND), Nigeria

Individuals:

1. Alberto Colorado - Patient Advocate/International Public Health Consultant
2. Prof. Brian Citro - Center for International Human Rights, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law
3. Colleen Daniels - CD Global Consulting, Australia
4. Lindokuhle Sibiyi - Patient advocate and program manager at Action against NCDs and TB in Eswatini