

To:

Ghada Fathi Waly

Executive Director

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

Dear Ms. Waly,

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 non-communicable diseases and TB in eSwatini
2. Afrihealth Optonet Association [CSOs Network], Nigeria
3. Alianza LAC-Global por el Acceso a Medicamentos

4. Arab Foundation For Freedoms and Equality
5. Canadian AIDS Society
6. Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
7. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
8. Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSDP)
9. Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation (CDPE)
10. Dr. Uzo Adirieje Foundation [DUZAFOUND], Nigeria
11. Drug Policy and Harm Reduction Platform- Malawi
12. Empower India, India
13. Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD)
14. Exchange Union
15. Georgian Harm Reduction Network
16. Harm Reduction International
17. Harm Reduction Victoria
18. Health GAP (Global Access Project)
19. hepCoalition
20. Human Rights Watch
21. Instituto RIA, Mexico
22. Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)
23. International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)
24. International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)
25. International Network of Women who Use Drugs
26. ITPC-MENA
27. Lawyers Collective, India
28. Medecins Du Monde Representation in Georgia
29. Medical IMPACT
30. Middle East and North Africa Network of/for People who Use Drugs (MENANPUD)
31. Misión Salud (Colombia)

32. Moms Stop The Harm, Canada
33. MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health & Rights
34. Positive Malaysian Treatment Access & Advocacy Group (MTAAG+)
35. Radanar Ayar Association, Myanmar
36. Reduc – Brazil
37. Society for Conservation and Sustainability of Energy and Environment in Nigeria (SOCSEEN)
38. Solidarity Network - Georgia
39. STOPAIDS
40. Treatment Action Group
41. Tunisian Association Defending Individual Liberties
42. Tunisian association of Positive Prevention (ATP+)
43. U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus
44. Volunteers for Development Nepal (VFDN), NEPAL
45. WHRIN (Women and Harm Reduction International Network)
46. Yolse, Public Health & Innovation, Switzerland
47. Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network

Individuals:

1. Abdulhafedh Alward – Yemen
2. Geoff Ward - Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy
3. Jane Dicka - Health Promotion & DOPE Co Ordinator – Harm Reduction Victoria
4. Leena Menghaney, Lawyer working on health and access to medicines
5. Mahamed Razali Ayub - Executive Committee, Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism – Malaysia
6. Matthew J. Akiyama, MD, MSc - Albert Einstein College of Medicine
7. Prof. Brian Citro, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law (Chicago, USA)
8. Tracy Swan, New York
9. Undule Mwakasungula--- UDK Consultancy , Malawi