



International Network of People who Use Drugs

What we can do globally to improve the rights of people who inject drugs?

The International Network of People who use Drugs

Vancouver Declaration, 2006

'We are people from around the world who use drugs. We are people who have been marginalized and discriminated against; we have been killed, harmed unnecessarily, put in jail, depicted as evil, and stereotyped as dangerous and disposable. Now it is time to raise our voices as citizens, establish our rights and reclaim the right to be our own spokespersons striving for self-representation and self-empowerment'

Core Principles

- Pro drug user rights
- Pro self-determination
- Pro harm reduction and safer drug use
- Respecting the right of people to use drugs or not
 - Anti-prohibitionist
 - Pro equality

Core Values and Principles

“Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people...All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

The promise of rights

- Ongoing criminalisation, stigma and discrimination allows for, and drives human rights violations against people who use drugs
- Our natural allies are other criminalised populations and stigmatised identities such as sex workers, LGBTQI, and people living with HIV
- Common struggle for our rights to be recognised as human rights; as we experience many of the same human rights violations



Three Pillars of Criminalisation, Stigma and Discrimination

Umbrella of Drug Control: Drug Related Treaties

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)

Human Rights Violations in the Name of Drug Control

- The Right to Life (Article 3 of the UDR, Article 6 of the ICCPR)
- The Right to Health (Constitution of the WHO, Article 12 of the ICESCR, Article 24 of CRC)
- Freedom from Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ICCPR, CAT, CRC)
- Freedom from Forced Labour (Article 8 of ICCPR)
- Right to Due Process and Fair Trial (Article 9 of the ICCPR)
- Right to be Free from Discrimination (ICERD, CEDAW, ICCPR)

Human Rights and Drug Policy

Parallel Universes

*'It is imperative that the international drug control system – the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Narcotics Control Board and so on – and the complex international human rights system that has evolved since 1948, cease to behave as though they exist in **parallel universes**' (Hunt 2008, pp. 10)*

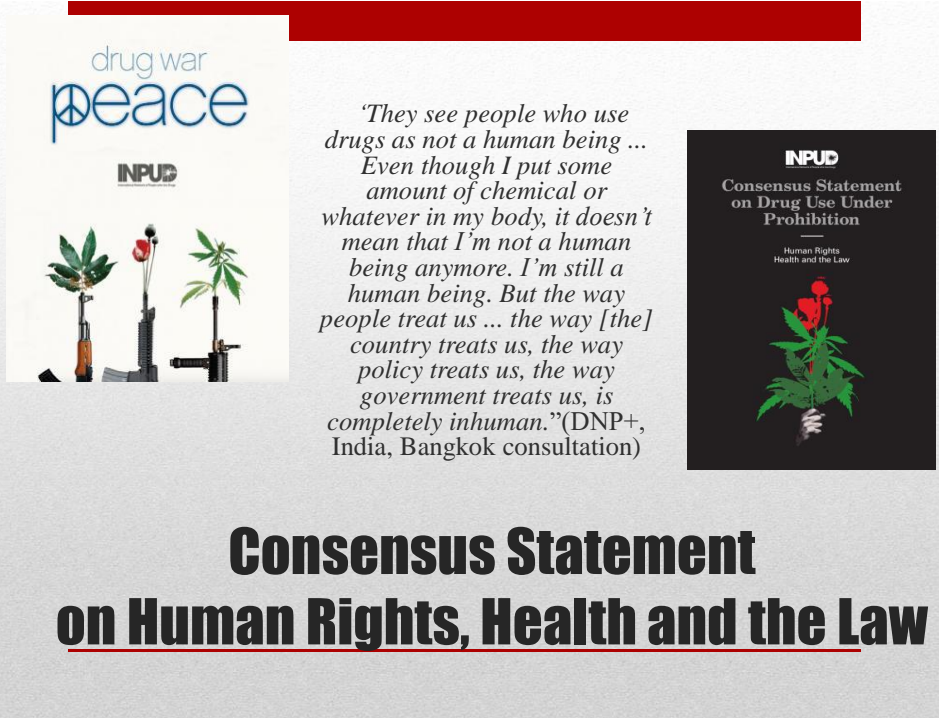
Drug use as “evil”

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs describes 'addiction to narcotic drugs' as a form of evil'. Neither slavery, apartheid nor torture are described as 'evil' in their relevant international conventions that prohibit them' (Lines 2010, pp. 5)

End Criminalisation

“Criminalisation of drug use, designed to deter drug use, possession and trafficking, has failed. Instead, it has perpetuated risky forms of drug use, while disproportionately punishing people who use drugs” (Grover 2010)

Drug Control and Human Rights



drug war
peace

INPUD

'They see people who use drugs as not a human being ... Even though I put some amount of chemical or whatever in my body, it doesn't mean that I'm not a human being anymore. I'm still a human being. But the way people treat us ... the way [the] country treats us, the way policy treats us, the way government treats us, is completely inhuman.' (DNP+, India, Bangkok consultation)

INPUD
Consensus Statement
on Drug Use Under
Prohibition

Human Rights
Health and the Law

Consensus Statement on Human Rights, Health and the Law



THERE'S A
STAIN ON THE
PHILIPPINES

STOP KILLING PEOPLE
WHO USE DRUGS!

INPUD

Committee on Economic,
Social and Cultural Rights
urges Philippines to stop
and prevent extrajudicial
killings and any form of
violence against drug users

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
Office of the High Commissioner
South-East Asia Regional Office

Photo: EPIMARK R. CRISTINO

Extra-Judicial Killings in the Philippines

- **Direct action:** Global Week of Action, October 2016
- **Global to Local coordination:** Formation of task force
- **Human Rights Mechanisms and Procedures:** Universal Periodic Review, Treaty Bodies, Special Rapporteur

- **Indonesia:** President Joko Widodo resumed the death penalty for “drug offences” ending an unofficial moratorium
- **Tanzania:** In February 2017, a presidential directive to intensify the war on drugs was issued. Security officers ordered to arrest users with an intent to pressure for disclosure of sellers and distributors of drugs
- **Cambodia:** Ramped up war on drugs on 1st of January, 2017. First 163 days of the campaign saw the arrest of close to 8000 people, with many detained in compulsory drug detention.

Human Rights Violations Around the World

Russia: Opiate substitution therapy is banned in Russia. HIV rates amongst people who inject drugs has skyrocketed; estimated that half a million of people who inject drugs are living with HIV

Three activists are taking Russia to the European Court of Human Rights for state failure to provide evidence-based treatment

“I saw how human rights are diminished because of the desire to achieve the so-called drug-free world, and the ideology of drug control which obviously would never be achieved”

Alexey Kurmanayevskiy, 2016



Human Rights Violations Around the World

- High-level decision making continues without community consultation and involvement
 - Representation can be tokenistic
- Community organisations lack capacity and resources to engage at same level as larger, established, better resourced INGOs
- Power and knowledge are intimately linked; lived experience is often devalued and deprioritised
- The priorities of decision makers often diverge from community priorities

Advocacy Spaces: Community experiences

- Political Declaration and Plan of Action on international cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem (2009)
- Commission on Narcotic Drugs (2018)
- Human Rights Instruments and Mechanisms; Treaty Bodies, UPRs, Special Rapporteurs etc.
- Sustainable Development Goals 2030

Entry Points for Global Advocacy

- **Lobby your governments** to commit to promoting a harm reduction and human rights-centred approach to drug use. Emphasise the critical need for **decriminalisation** of drug use
- Build relationships with drug user networks in-country and **commit to ensuring community consultations inform your work**, and identifying community-appropriate consultation mechanisms
- Recognise that advocating for progressive **change is multi-faceted**, has multiple pressure points and requires a multi-pronged approach
- **Community involvement** is key to **both the principle (ethics) and practice (efficacy)** of drug policy

What we can do

- Commit to **bottom-up rather than top down** models and approaches of social change
 - **Develop the capacity of people who use drugs in**
 - Documenting human rights violations
 - drafting and writing shadow reports
 - lobbying member states and UN
- **Recognise that the best approach may sometimes mean stepping aside to allow space for community-led work**
 - **Funding and fundraising support**

What we can do

No group of oppressed people ever attained liberation without the involvement of those directly affected by this oppression.

Through collective action, we will fight to change existing local, national, regional and international drug laws and formulate an evidence-based drug policy that respects people's human rights and dignity instead of one fuelled on moralism, stereotypes and lies.

Vancouver Declaration, 2006



International Network of People who use Drugs
