



Promoting fair and  
effective criminal justice



FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR  
CONSULTATION  
Quaker United Nations Office

**Panel discussion on the progress in and challenges of addressing human rights issues in the context of efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030, 11 March 2016, 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

## **Joint oral statement by QUNO and PRI**

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) and Penal Reform International welcome today's panel discussion and would like to highlight challenges around HIV/ AIDS in prison settings.

We are concerned that the current international drug control system favours criminalisation of drug use over health and human rights.

This approach has driven people away from community-based health services and has exacerbated the spread of HIV. The punitive approach has also proven to be a major contributing factor to prison overcrowding.

Research has shown that across the globe HIV prevalence rates in prison are drastically higher than in the general population. Reasons for this include poor and overcrowded prison conditions, inadequate health care and lack of harm reduction services.

Persons in custody have a right to the same standard of healthcare as found outside of prisons. This is reiterated in the Nelson Mandela Rules which state in Rule 24 that healthcare services in prison should be organised 'in a way that ensures continuity of treatment and care, including for HIV (...)'.

Yet, in spite of this, in 2014 only 43 countries provided opioid substitution therapy in prison settings and only 8 countries provided harm reduction programmes in prisons.

Where drug treatment programmes are available in prison, these are often only available in men's prisons or delivered in less advantageous conditions for women.

Today's panel discussion seeks to 'undertake a comprehensive review' of efforts to end the AIDS epidemic, including challenges in ensuring availability and accessibility of treatment without discrimination.

In light of this our questions for the Panel are:

- 1) what steps have you taken to ensure that prevention, treatment and care in prison settings are incorporated into your efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic?
- 2) And what steps should States take to ensure this population is not excluded from their efforts?

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Delivered on 11 March 2016, by *Laurel Townhead*