

HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE

STRATEGY MEETING
Sitges, October 2024

OBJECTIVES

1. Deepening understanding of the coalition's history, context, and role in the current global landscape.
2. Evaluating the relevance of HJWW's aims, values, and principles in light of emerging challenges and partner priorities.
3. Defining the strategic direction and purpose of HJWW for 2025 and beyond.
4. Strengthening partnerships and integrating scientific advancements into advocacy for HIV justice.
5. Enhancing communication strategies for collaborative advocacy to effectively combat HIV criminalisation globally.



Objective 1

Deepening understanding of the coalition's history, context, and role in the current global landscape.

HISTORY

After a round of introductions and welcomes, HJN's Executive Director, Edwin Bernard, provided a brief history and overview of the HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE coalition:

- The coalition was founded in 2016 in Brighton, following transformative funding from the Robert Carr Fund. It united 7 original founding partners to address HIV criminalisation on a global scale. The coalition launched with the goal of mobilising, sharing resources, and supporting advocacy for HIV justice.
- In the early years, the coalition conducted key advocacy training workshops in Berlin and Johannesburg to build capacity and empower local advocates, lawyers, and journalists.
- The coalition supported law reform efforts, such as removing HIV criminalisation provisions in Malawi in 2017 and played a key role in the creation of the Expert Consensus Statement on HIV science in the context of criminal law in 2018.
- The coalition has been building regional capacity, including supporting the creation of a Francophone (Africa) Network and a Latin America and Caribbean network and collectively supported decriminalisation victories in countries like Belarus, Colombia, and Mexico.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the coalition had to adapt and shift to virtual convenings and webinars, including moving the Beyond Blame pre-conferences online. The coalition also brought global attention to the issue of molecular HIV surveillance and its rights implications.
- In 2022, the coalition celebrated the repeal of Zimbabwe's HIV-specific criminal law, the first such law enacted in Africa. HIV is not a Crime Awareness Day established in 2022 by the Sero project, on 28th February went global in 2024 a HJWW joint activity.
- To learn more visit: www.hivjusticeworldwide.org/milestones

CONTEXT

Paddy Lawrence from Frontline AIDS presented on their research and work on the anti-gender movement in Sub-Saharan Africa and its impact on various groups, including the LGBTQ community and those fighting for abortion rights, and its harmful effects on access to HIV services. The presentation, which is attached at the end of this report, covered:

- The methods and tactics used by the anti-rights movement, such as leveraging critical milestones, changing stakeholder dynamics, and spreading misinformation.
- The movement's close links to the US Christian Right and family values movement, and how they promote conservative religious ideology and frame their efforts as pro-family.
- The impact of the anti-rights movement on HIV prevention, including increased criminalisation, stigma, and discrimination against LGBTQ communities.
- The Stop CSE campaign's success in framing comprehensive sexuality education as sexualizing African children and undermining national sovereignty.

Objective 2

Evaluating the relevance of HJWW's aims, values, and principles in light of emerging challenges and partner priorities

Three working groups discussed HJWW's focus, values and principles.



The following key changes were discussed and agreed upon for the mission, values and principles. There was broad agreement that our mission and values and principles are good foundation for our collaborative work, but the following suggestions were made:

Mission:

- Add "perceived status" to the mission statement
- Add "abolish existing" and "resist new" criminalisation to the mission
- Explicitly reference stigma and different types of inequality (gender, race, etc.)
- Acknowledge other forms of criminalisation that intersect with HIV criminalisation

Values and Principles:

- Recognise that HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE is part of a global society where what happens in one place affects others
- Emphasise the importance of getting out of comfort zones and reaching out to new populations and groups

The group discussed these changes carefully, considering the need to be inclusive while also being mindful of potential funding constraints.

NEXT STEPS: We need volunteers for a small working group to work with HJN on refreshing our values and principles.

Objective 3

Defining the strategic direction and purpose of HJWW for 2025 and beyond

It was agreed that HJWW should maintain a central focus on HIV criminalisation while acknowledging intersecting forms of criminalisation, and the importance of a global perspective. Suggestions for improvement included more structured meetings, clearer communication, and leveraging diverse expertise. Participants emphasised the need for collaboration, solidarity, and innovative approaches.

Examples of the value of HJWW from coalition partners included:

- Offers guidance, leadership, expertise, data, resources, connections, global community, inspiration, hope.
- Provides opportunities for joint advocacy, learning exchange, strategic thinking.

Examples of what HJWW coalition partners can do for the coalition includes:

- Legal and technical support - at UN level and in-county connections to intersectional communities.
- Regional leadership and expertise.
- Strategic communications / advocacy opportunities
- Additional resources (small grants / litigation fund)
- Fill gaps



We then workshoped to identify gaps, synergies and potential solutions:

Gaps Identified:

1. Regional coordination of efforts
2. Anticipating the impact of digital disinformation campaigns
3. Engaging with religious leaders
4. Addressing the gap in Asia Pacific
5. Bridging the "U=U, not creating viral underclass" and removing fear/stigma in HIV discussions
6. Understanding the political landscape and case studies

7. Community preparedness and awareness
8. Engaging with prosecutors, judges, and the criminal legal system

Solutions Offered:

1. Leveraging the expertise and connections of coalition partners to fill regional gaps
2. Collaborating on joint social media campaigns and sharing tools/approaches
3. Exploring partnerships with religious leaders and ecumenical groups
4. Seeking funding and resources to expand work in underrepresented regions
5. Developing resources and training on U=U and reducing HIV-related stigma
6. Producing a podcast series to share political landscape analysis and case studies
7. Providing small grants and technical assistance to support community preparedness
8. Developing training and engagement strategies for prosecutors, judges, and other legal actors

The meeting emphasised the importance of the broader coalition working together to identify and address these gaps, drawing on the diverse expertise and resources available across the network.



Objective 4:

Strengthening partnerships and integrating scientific advancements into advocacy for HIV justice.

INTERSECTIONALITY ONLINE COURSE

Alison Symington, HJN's Senior Policy Analyst, presented her work developing practical course and toolkit on intersectionality – which aims to strengthen partnerships. The course – added to the Online Learning portal of the HIV Justice Academy – will include case studies, exercises, and resources to enhance advocacy and collaboration.

To ensure the intersectionality course is tailored to different regions and key populations, and empowers advocates, the following suggestions were made:

1. Engage with key population networks and organisations to co-develop content that reflects their specific needs and experiences. This includes sex workers, migrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, people who use drugs, and others.
2. Incorporate case studies and examples from diverse regional contexts to showcase how intersectionality manifests differently across the world. This could include highlighting issues like vagrancy laws in Africa or the criminalisation of sex work in different legal frameworks.
3. Provide guidance on how to conduct intersectional analysis of laws, policies, and their impacts on marginalised communities. This could involve exercises on mapping power dynamics and identifying overlapping forms of oppression.
4. Include modules on legal empowerment, so advocates can better navigate and challenge punitive systems that criminalize their identities and behaviours.
5. Develop resources and tools for effective communication with policymakers, prosecutors, and other stakeholders to advocate for intersectional approaches.
6. Explore ways to provide ongoing support, mentorship, and small grants to course participants to apply intersectionality in their local contexts.

The key is to centre the voices and experiences of those most impacted and equip advocates with the knowledge and skills to integrate intersectionality into their HIV criminalisation work in a meaningful and impactful way.

A few individuals and organisations offered to support Alison and the HJN team in developing the intersectionality course:

1. Cecile Kazatchkine from the HIV Legal Network discussed the work they have done in Senegal and DRC to engage sex worker organisations in law reform processes, and offered to explore how that could feed into the course.
2. Michaela Clayton from ARASA offered to assist and work with Cecile and others on the course, particularly in relation to criminalisation work in the Southern and East Africa region.
3. Tambudzai Gonese from SALC offered to share a resource on the African Commission's advisory opinion on vagrancy offences, which could be a useful input for the course content.

NEXT STEPS: Alison will reach out to the above, and the rest of the coalition for support early next year, although this work depends on funding.

BRINGING SCIENCE TO JUSTICE

The meeting then focused on the impact of the 2018 Expert Consensus Statement and plans to collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) on a new technical brief to address emerging scientific advancements, particularly on the role of viral suppression in transmission. An agreement in principle for WHO to partially support this work was made during AIDS 2024.

Participants suggested engaging regional WHO offices, ECDC, and other stakeholders to ensure the brief's effectiveness. Concerns about the unintended consequences of U=U advocacy were raised, and the importance of community consultations and strategic engagement with various organisations was underscored.

Ideas for how the technical brief work could move forward include:

- Conducting a desk review of how HIV science has impacted HIV criminalisation so far.
- Conducting focus groups with scientists, legal experts, and community stakeholders to ascertain what is needed in the new technical brief.
- Identifying other processes and stakeholders, such as Prevention Access Campaign, the organisation behind the U=U movement.
- Crowdsourcing potential endorsers amongst the scientific community or other scientific institutions for the new technical brief.
- Engaging with the UN Human Rights Reference Group and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to seek their endorsement and involvement in the development of the technical brief.

NEXT STEPS: HJN will work with WHO's Geneva secretariat to move this project forward in 2025, subject to funding.



Objective 5

Enhancing communication strategies for collaborative advocacy to effectively combat HIV criminalisation globally

Alex Garner (MPact) and Andy Tapia (Sero) discussed Mpact Global's efforts to combat stigma in Mexico and Latin America, highlighting the significance of public representation and the empowerment of HIV-positive trans people through initiatives like [Sidosidades Maricas](#).

In her presentation, Janet Butler McPhee (HIV Legal Network) stressed the importance of strategic communications, suggesting a coalition approach to enhance messaging consistency and impact. Participants discussed leveraging existing assets, such as social media platforms and local networks, to amplify messages and improve outreach, with a particular focus on the upcoming HIV is Not a Crime Awareness Day on February 28th, 2025. Janet's presentation is attached at the end of this report.



NEXT STEPS:

- Conduct an asset inventory of the organizations' communications capabilities, including social media channels, podcasts, and other platforms.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a communications working group to coordinate strategy and implementation.
- Develop a plan for the 2025 HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day, including identifying key objectives, target audiences, and communication activities.
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate with other social justice movements and human rights organizations to expand the reach and impact of the coalition's communications.
- Identify potential champions within government and legislative bodies who could help amplify the coalition's messages around HIV criminalisation.

FINAL REFLECTIONS



We moved outside to the Sitges sunshine for a reflection of our meeting. Participants expressed a mix of emotions, including exhaustion, gratitude, and motivation.

Key themes included the importance of continuing discussions and actions from the meeting, such as integrating new ideas and maintaining connections.

Specific commitments included updating work plans, reaching out to colleagues, and enhancing communication strategies. Participants highlighted the value of in-person interactions and the renewed energy and inspiration derived from the gathering.

Meeting organiser, Edwin Bernard, concluded by emphasising the coalition's growth and the need for ongoing collaboration and support. He recognised that the meeting marked a significant moment for HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE, fostering a renewed sense of community and shared goals.

This meeting was made possible with the provision of a financial grant from Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd and was supported by a grant from the Robert Carr Fund provided to the HIV Justice Global Consortium.

HJWW Sitges Meeting Participant List

HIV Justice Network team / consultants

1. Edwin Bernard - Executive Director
2. Sive Stofile - Operations Manager
3. Alison Symington - Senior Policy Analyst
4. Sylvie Beaumont - Research and multi-lingual support consultant
5. Sofia Varguez - Programmatic support consultant
6. Julian Hows - Training support consultant
7. Nicholas Feustel – Video and visuals consultant
8. Elliot Hatt - Policy Analyst
9. Aleksei Lakhov - EECA support consultant
10. Brent Allan - Global HIV Migration / fundraising consultant

HIV Justice Network Supervisory Board

1. Richard Elliot
2. Immaculate Owomugisha (also ICW Global)
3. Sarai Chisala-Tempelhoff
4. Paul Kidd

RCF HIV Justice Global Consortium members

1. Janet Butler-McPhee (Co-ED, HIV Legal Network)
2. Cécile Kazatchkine (Senior Policy Analyst, HIV Legal Network)
3. Mikhail Golichenko (Senior Policy Analyst, HIV Legal Network)
4. Kamaria Laffrey (Co-ED, Sero Project)
5. Andy Tapia (LAC Coordinator, Sero Project)
6. Svitlana Moroz (ED/ Project Coordinator, EWNA)
7. Tambudzai Manjonjo (Deputy Director, SALC)
8. Sasha Volgina (Community Networks & Partnerships Manager, GNP+)
9. Michaela Clayton (Acting ED, ARASA, virtual)

HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE Coalition partners

1. Nina Tumanyan (Project Manager, AIDS Action Europe)
2. Paddy Lawrance (Advisor: Human Rights Advocacy, Frontline AIDS)
3. Ajeng Larasati (Human Rights Lead, Harm Reduction International)
4. Alex Garner (Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communications, MPact)
5. Marnina Miller (Co-ED, PWN-USA)
6. Sallie Thomas (Policy Specialist, Decriminalization, PWN-USA, virtual)
7. Doan Thanh Tung (Senior Advisor for Program Management and Resource Mobilization, Y+ Global)
8. Sophie Brion (Director of Global Programmes, ICW Global, virtual)
9. Anna Shapiro, (Policy Manager, NSWP, virtual)