

**91 NGOS FROM 47 COUNTRIES EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR COSTA RICA'S FORTHCOMING JOINT
STATEMENT ON THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF PERSONS RELEASED
FROM DETENTION OR UNDER SUPERVISION**

September 8, 2023

To Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the United Nations (Geneva, Switzerland):

We, the undersigned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing every region of the world, write to express our strong support for the circulating Joint Statement led by Costa Rica to be presented at the 54th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (The Council). This Joint Statement concerns the social reintegration of persons released from detention or under supervision. We strongly believe this is a human rights issue, and we ask your Government to sign on to the Joint Statement.

All States face the dual challenges of social reintegration and preventing recidivism; yet, post-release support falls disproportionately on NGOs and families. Today, there are more than 11.5 million people behind bars around the world – most of whom stand to be released and rejoin society. Specific groups of released prisoners, such as women, children, the LGBTQ community, ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous populations, and people with disabilities, mental health challenges, or drug dependency, face special barriers to successful reintegration that must be holistically addressed.

We applaud emerging practices by UN Member States to advance re-entry and post-release support. Effective practices, such as medical care handoffs, housing assistance, connection to employment, family reunification, victim-offender dialogue, and public awareness campaigns, have significant benefits not only for released prisoners, but for the sustainable development of communities overall. Conversely, failed reintegration undermines the human rights of released prisoners, their families, and the broader community.

Rule 90 of the Nelson Mandela Rules emphasizes that “the duty of society does not end with a prisoner’s release,” and the UN Common Position on Incarceration explains, “[e]ven the best prison-based rehabilitation progra[ms] will be undermined if former prisoners find themselves without any post-release support.” There is clear global consensus on the importance of post-release support, yet existing international human rights frameworks do not provide guidance to States on how to implement post-release social reintegration programs. While the UN Office on Drugs and Crime has undertaken complementary efforts on social reintegration as a crime prevention strategy, further work is needed to advance this issue as a matter of human rights.

As NGOs, we recognize that social reintegration requires a collective global, national, and local commitment to creating strategies, sharing effective practices, and fostering collaboration. We recognize the important role the Council can play in advancing a global consensus on this issue, while also guiding States on the implementation of effective practices that uphold the human rights and dignity of released prisoners.

We respectfully request your Government support Costa Rica's Joint Statement and support collaboration in developing an international approach for the social reintegration of persons released from detention or under supervision.

Thank you for your attention. Please reach out to Costa Rica Minister Counsellor Roberto Céspedes Gomez at +41 79 825 8705 on Whatsapp or rcespedes@rree.go.cr with any questions or to indicate your Government's interest in signing on to the Joint Statement.

Sincerely,

ACAT-Liberia
Monrovia, Liberia

Acción Técnica Social
Bogotá, Colombia

ACT for the Disappeared
Beirut, Lebanon

AdvocAid
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Africa Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
Serrekunda, The Gambia

Africa Jom Center
Dakar, Senegal

African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)
Cape Town, South Africa

Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Vienna, Austria

American Civil Liberties Union
New York, New York, USA

Anti-Drug Abuse Forum
Harare, Zimbabwe

Antigone
Rome, Italy

Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas (ACEID)
San José, Costa Rica

Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)
Geneva, Switzerland

Association Panafrica
France

Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)
Canberra, Australia

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
Sydney, Australia

Center for Prisoners' Rights (CPR)
Tokyo, Japan

Center for the Study of Crime
Athens, Greece

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Centre du Commerce International Pour le Développement
Conakry, Guinea

Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation (CDPE)
Toronto, Canada

**Ceza İnfaz Sisteminde Sivil Toplum
Derneği (CISST)**
Istanbul, Türkiye

**Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des
Droits Humains (CTDDH)**
Togo

Colectivo Artesana
Guatemala City, Guatemala

**Correlation-European Harm Reduction
Network**
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Corporación Humanas Centro Regional
de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de
Género**
Bogotá, Colombia

Corporación Mujeres Libres
Bogotá, Colombia

Death Penalty Focus
Sacramento, California, USA

**Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional
Law, Governance and Human Rights
University of the Western Cape**
Bellville, South Africa

**Eldoret Women for Development
(ELWOFOD)**
Eldoret, Kenya

Fair Trials
London, United Kingdom

Faraja Foundation
Nairobi, Kenya

**Federazione Italiana Diritti Umani
(FIDU)**
Rome, Italy

**Forum de Dialogue Interculturel et
Interreligieux**
Geneva, Switzerland

**Forum de la Radio Télévision des droits
de l'homme**
Brazzaville, Congo

**German Coalition to Abolish the Death
Penalty**
Hamburg, Germany

Greater Caribbean for Life
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Harm Reduction Australia
Sydney, Australia

**Himalayan Research and Cultural
Foundation**
New Delhi, India

The HIV Legal Network
Toronto, Canada

India HIV/AIDS Alliance
New Delhi, India

**Indonesian Harm Reduction Network
(JANGKAR)**
Jakarta, Indonesia

INHR
Geneva, Switzerland

**Institute des Médias pour la Démocratie
et les Droits de l'Homme (IM2DH)**
Togo

Institute RIA
Mexico City, México

**Instituto Terra, Trabalho e Cidadania
(ITTC)**
São Paulo, Brazil

International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

The International Corrections and Prisons Association
Brussels, Belgium

International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT)
Paris, France

The International Legal Foundation
New York, New York, USA

International Support for Human Rights
Geneva, Switzerland

Japan Innocence and Death Penalty Information Center
Akashi City, Japan

Just Speak Aotearoa-New Zealand
Wellington City, New Zealand

Justice for All International
Geneva, Switzerland

Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Beverly, Massachusetts, USA

Law Society of Azerbaijan
Baku, Azerbaijan

Legal and Human Rights Centre Tanzania
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Mandela Center for Transitional Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Metzineres
Barcelona, Spain

Next Generation Lawyers (NEXTGEN Lawyers)
Nairobi, Kenya

ONG Leasur
Santiago, Chile

Organisation pour la Coopération et le Développement Economique Internationale
Paris, France

The Organization for Friends and Family of Prisoners (FFP)
Oslo, Norway

Penal Reform International
London, United Kingdom

Perseus Strategies
Washington, D.C., USA

PREKURSOR Foundation
Warsaw, Poland

Prisoners' Advice Service
London, United Kingdom

Prisoners' Future Foundation (PFF)
Kabwe, Zambia

Promo-LEX
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

REFORM Alliance
Washington, D.C., USA

REJADD-TOGO
Lomé, Togo

Release (UK)
London, United Kingdom

Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme
Dakar, Senegal

**Réseau de Formation et de Recherches
sur les Migrations Africaines**
Lancy, Switzerland

Safer Drug Policies
Oslo, Norway

Salam for Democracy and Human Rights
London, United Kingdom

Southern Africa Litigation Centre
Johannesburg, South Africa

**South African Network of People Who
Use Drugs**
Cape Town, South Africa

Stichting Mainline
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Sukaar Welfare Organization Pakistan
Umerkot, Pakistan

Sunny African Children's Center
Uganda

**Supervision Around the World (SAW)
Project**
Boulder, Colorado, USA

Uhili Necessity Wellness Trust WO 478
Swakopmund, Namibia

United for Human Rights
Geneva, Switzerland

Villages Unies (United Villages)
Geneva, Switzerland

**Washington Office on Latin America
(WOLA)**
Washington, D.C., USA

Women Nest
Nairobi, Kenya

Women Beyond Walls
Global

World Society of Victimology (WSV)
Mönchengladbach, Germany

**Youth RISE (Resources, Information,
Support, Education)**
Dublin, Republic of Ireland

**Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
(ZimRights)**
Harare, Zimbabwe