





# You can help challenge wrongs, advance rights, and transform lives.

Denied basic health care. Criminalized and vilified for love. Unfairly targeted by police. These abuses, and more, are too often the experience of people living with HIV and of communities affected by HIV.

At the **HIV Legal Network**, our mission has always been the same: **to create a world where the human rights and dignity of people living with and at risk of HIV are fully realized**, and where governments not only protect these rights, but actively promote them. It's not only the right thing to do, it's also a necessary part of an effective response to the HIV epidemic, which thrives on injustice and exacerbates inequality.

Yet governments around the world continue to pass laws that deny people their human rights. Some ignore existing laws meant to protect us. Instead of respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights, they are impeding, undermining, and violating them. The poisons of racism, homophobia, and misogyny are resurgent in too many quarters, and Canada is not immune. But our resistance comes from our hope for a better future, working in solidarity with those who are targeted and with other human rights defenders to make sustainable change.

## Building a better world

In 1992, a group of lawyers and other advocates founded the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. They understood that stigma, discrimination, and human rights abuses fuel the epidemic — and therefore defending and advancing human rights must be part of the response. We've changed our name, but not our values or our mission. **We are now the HIV Legal Network.**

For more than a quarter-century, the HIV Legal Network has challenged injustice, using scientific evidence and legal advocacy to defend rights and advocate for policies that will help us overcome the HIV epidemic. Our team has had many notable successes over the years, including:

- **Securing a new directive** from the federal Attorney General and Parliamentary committee recommendations to limit unjust criminal prosecutions against people living with HIV in Canada.
- **Pursuing a trail-blazing court case** that finally pushed the federal government to introduce North America's first needle and syringe program in Canadian federal prisons.
- **Documenting and reporting** on sex workers' experiences of law enforcement since the introduction of a federal law in 2014 that was supposed to "protect" them.
- **Advocating** for supervised consumption services and overdose prevention sites with partners across Canada, including successfully lobbying for changes that streamline the law providing exemptions for such life-saving services from criminal prosecution.
- **Building a network** of community "street lawyers" in Russia that helps some of the most marginalized people defend their rights and gain access to health services.

- **Working alongside local activists** to launch strategic litigation in several Caribbean countries to overturn colonial-era laws that criminalize LGBTQ people and fuel discrimination, violence, and the HIV epidemic.
- **Collaborating with global human rights activists** to challenge the criminalization of people living with HIV through the HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE movement we helped create.
- **Bringing groundbreaking cases and submissions** before the United Nations and other international bodies to defend and advance the human rights of people living with HIV, people who use drugs, people in prison, LGBTQ people, and sex workers.

Over the years, the HIV Legal Network has built a reputation for high-quality work and for being a credible, authoritative advocate for policy positions that challenge the status quo. We know that an effective response to the HIV epidemic can only be achieved when those who are most affected are meaningfully involved in building solutions. Ending HIV as a public health threat will take the hard work of those affected, governments, and many other groups.

**Our work is designed to ensure that respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights is a key part of the response, in Canada and around the world.**



