

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY MESSAGE 2015

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Michel Sidibé

Executive Director of UNAIDS

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

The AIDS movement, led by people living with and affected by HIV, continues to inspire the world and offer a model for a people-centred, rights-based approach to global health and social transformation. And yet, today, amid a swirl of competing and complex global concerns, we confront a serious new obstacle: the oppressive weight of complacency. This is happening when we know that if we focus on the places and people most affected by HIV, the world can end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat.

This moment is, however, fleeting. We have a fragile window of opportunity in which to scale up. Efforts need to intensify in the locations and among the populations at higher risk of HIV, including women, young people, prisoners, sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people and people who inject drugs.

Too often, laws, policies and practices undermine equitable access to life-changing HIV services for people most affected by HIV. Punitive laws that hinder effective responses to HIV remain widespread. Some 75 countries criminalize consensual same-sex sexual relations, and the vast majority of countries and territories criminalize drug use and sex work.

Ending AIDS by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals means breaking down prejudice, exclusion, criminalization and discrimination. This will require progress across the entire spectrum of rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, social, sexual and reproductive.

UNAIDS has launched a bold call to action to leave no one behind through the new UNAIDS 2016–2021 Strategy. It is a call to defend the rights of all people. Through the realization of their rights, people being left behind will move ahead, to the very forefront of the journey to end the AIDS epidemic—informed and empowered, mobilized and engaged.

On International Human Rights Day 2015, let us stand together to ensure that all people, living with or without HIV, are able to live their lives to the fullest, from birth to adulthood and into old age, free from discrimination and with dignity and equality.

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Contact

UNAIDS Geneva | Sophie Barton-Knott | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | bartonknotts@unaids.org

UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at [unaids.org](https://www.unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.