

'War on drugs' is fueling HIV epidemic: report

June 26 2012

A pressure group that includes six former presidents called Tuesday for the United Nations to acknowledge that "repressive drug law enforcement" was driving an HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The global "war on drugs" was forcing users away from treatment and into environments where the risk of contracting HIV was high, the Global Commission on [Drug](#) Policy (GCDP) argued.

In a report published Tuesday, the panel urged the UN to "acknowledge and address the causal links between the war on drugs and the spread of HIV/AIDS and drug market violence".

It also presented evidence that aggressive law enforcement policies created barriers to HIV treatment.

"The public health implications of [HIV treatment](#) disruptions resulting from drug law enforcement tactics have not been appropriately recognized as a major impediment to efforts to control the global HIV/AIDS pandemic," it argued.

The GCDP is a panel of politicians, writers and businessmen that advocates decriminalizing drug use by those who "do no harm to others".

Members of the GCDP include six former presidents, four of whom are from Latin America: Mexico's Ernesto Zedillo, Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, Ricardo Lagos of Chile and Colombia's Cesar

Gaviria.

It was Gaviria who led Colombia when police gunned down the notorious drug-runner Pablo Escobar in 1993.

Other supporters include the European Union's former foreign policy chief Javier Solana and George Shultz, the who served as US secretary of state during Ronald Reagan's presidency.

The report accused the US, Russia and Thailand of ignoring scientific evidence about the relationship between [law enforcement](#) policies and HIV rates "with devastating consequences."

The increased availability of drugs worldwide proved that the strategy was failing, it added.

"The war on drugs has failed, and millions of new HIV infections and AIDS deaths can be averted if action is taken now," it concluded.

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