HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day 2026

For #HINACDay and #HIVIsNotACrime, read these statements by HIV Justice Worldwide coalition and the Center for HIV Law & Policy.

February 27, 2026 By Trent Straube

Saturday, February 28, marks the fifth annual HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day (#HINACDay; #HIVIsNotACrime). It is a time to inform and rally the public about unjust laws that target people living with HIV and to promote efforts to modernize those laws. This year's #HIVIsNotACrime awareness day arrives amid growing attacks against human rights and social justice, and advocate across the globe unite to battle not only HIV criminalization but also stigma, racism, anti-LGBTQ laws, violence against immigrants, and related injustices.

> Honoring #HIVIsNotACrime Awareness Day, Sero released its documentary "To Be Free" on February 24th. Watch "To Be...
>
> Posted by The SERO Project on Friday, February 27, 2026

The HIV criminalization awareness day is spearheaded by Sero Project, a nonprofit that fights HIV crime laws, along with the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation and other global HIV advocacy groups. Visit the HINACDay Facebook page for the latest updates, and search the hashtags online to find promotional and educational posts and info about events near you as well as those held virtually. (Sample posts are included throughout this article.)

> Today's #HIVJustice News leads with the HIV JUSTICE

WORLDWIDE statement for #HINACDay, responding to the resurgence of anti-gay and HIV criminalisation laws. It also brings critical updates for HIV justice advocates worldwide mailchi.mp/hivjustice.n... #HIVIsNotACrime #EndHIVCriminalisation

[image or embed]

— HIV Justice Network (@hivjustice.net) February 27, 2026 at 9:28 AM

HIV criminalization refers to the use of unfair laws to target people who have HIV—notably, African-American, Latino and LGBTQ people and women—and to punish them because of their HIV status, not because of their actions. Under outdated laws, people with HIV can be sentenced to prison in cases where HIV was not transmitted and their only crime was allegedly not disclosing their status.

Posted by HIV Is Not A Crime Awareness Day on Thursday, February 19, 2026



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by BLAQLOV3 Incorporated (@blaqlov3)

It should be noted that repealing HIV laws does not mean that people can't be held accountable for intentionally transmitting HIV. Other laws may apply to the situation.

In conjunction with HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day, the Center for HIV Law & Policy (CHLP) released a statement titled "Being Human Is Not a Crime: HIV, Immigration and State Violence" that calls for social movements to unite in solidarity to resist systems of imprisonment and to "affirm that no person's health or immigration status should ever be grounds for punishment." The statement reads in part:

> When we say "HIV is not a crime," we affirm that no person's health status or identity can ever be a legal basis for their arrest, prosecution, or imprisonment. CHLP is an abolitionist organization rooted in a radical Black queer feminist politic. We fight to end stigma, policing, and state violence that brutalize our communities. This past year, our communities have weathered military occupation, ethnic cleansing, immigration enforcement operations, and an escalating campaign of state terror intended to suppress political opposition against an illegitimate authoritarian regime. With February 28 being HIV is Not a Crime (HINAC) Awareness Day, we must be clear: when we say "HIV is not a crime," we also mean no person is illegal.
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> Failing to connect this moment of anti-immigrant, anti-Black violence, and those at its intersections, to the fight against health criminalization is an unacceptable and dangerous disconnect. The rhetoric used by this regime to portray immigrants as violent criminals who are taking resources away from "good," "hardworking Americans" echoes the same narratives used to criminalize and subjugate Black Americans since the founding of this country. The spectacle of state power in Minnesota and beyond plainly reveals the bridge between cruel anti-immigrant crackdowns unleashed on our cities and the legacy of the criminal legal

system: white supremacy. The people targeted by both forms of state violence—the policing of our borders and our streets—are Black and brown people. The very same people confronted by racist barriers to HIV care, prevention, treatment, and housing are criminalized by the state because of their health or immigration status.

HIV criminalization laws can operate as a fast track to detention and deportation. Any arrest, admission, or conviction can trigger immigration consequences, and immigration courts often interpret these cases in ways that deepen stigma and reinforce the idea that immigrants are outsiders and inherently dangerous. This mirrors the discrimination routinely faced by people living with HIV (PLHIV) who are wrongly framed as threats due to their health status. The overlap is obvious: anyone not white, not straight or cis, not wealthy, is seen as a criminal and must be warehoused away from the public for safety's sake.

Criminalization and the fear it provokes deepen the mistrust and isolation of communities. The ongoing campaign of violence waged by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) against immigrants adds yet another barrier to healthcare for already marginalized groups.

In this HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness (HINAC) Day statement, CHLP calls for the abolishment of ICE and the repeal of HIV...

Posted by Center for HIV Law & Policy on Friday, February 27, 2026

The HIV Justice Worldwide coalition also released a statement to raise the alarm about the resurgence of laws that target LGBTQ people and those living with HIV. It reads in part:

> A wave of arrests targeting gay men and other men who have sex with men has been accompanied by mandatory testing and unprecedented HIV-related charges, with many of those detained subsequently identified as living with HIV. The convergence of anti-gay laws and HIV criminalisation provisions has created a perfect storm in which identity and health status are used together to justify surveillance, prosecution, and public shaming. In response, Senegal's National Council for the Fight against AIDS (CNLS) has publicly called for an approach grounded in science and human rights, noting the detrimental impact these prosecutions have on public health.
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> These developments are not isolated. Around the world, 83 countries retain HIV-specific criminal laws and 65 continue to criminalise consensual same-sex relationships. …

Criminalisation is not public health. It is stigma weaponised through state power.

The HIV Justice Worldwide coalition includes five calls to action, demanding:

- Governments to halt and reverse the expansion of laws that criminalize HIV non-disclosure, potential or perceived exposure, or unintentional transmission, as well as those criminalizing same-sex intimacy, and to ensure that public health policy is never distorted into a mechanism of punishment. Forced HIV testing, coerced disclosure, public naming, and discriminatory prosecutions have no place in a rights-based legal system.

- Prosecutors and courts to uphold due process and equality before the law, and to refuse to apply criminal provisions in ways that target individuals because of their identity, relationships or health status. Discretion must be exercised in accordance with current scientific evidence and international human rights standards.

- Health authorities to actively safeguard confidentiality and reaffirm that health care exists to serve patients, not law enforcement. Trust in health systems is essential to effective prevention, treatment, and care.

- Media professionals to recognize the impact of their reporting. Sensational coverage, inaccurate information, and moral panic inflame stigma and prejudice legal outcomes. Accurate, balanced, and science-based reporting promotes public health and equal rights.

- International institutions and donors to speak clearly against the (re)criminalization of LGBTQ+ communities and the aggressive enforcement of HIV laws, and to sustain support for community-led, evidence-based responses grounded in dignity, equality, and justice.

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