

# **HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE**

## **Calls on Uzbekistan to Abandon Mandatory HIV Testing Law**

**To:**  
**The President and Members of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

18 August 2025

We, the undersigned members of the HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE coalition, write to express our deep concern and strong opposition to the law adopted by the Oliy Majlis on 1 August 2025 mandating compulsory HIV testing for returning Uzbek citizens and for non-citizens entering or residing in Uzbekistan for work. This law, now awaiting presidential assent, represents a serious violation of human rights and will undermine, rather than advance, the country's HIV response.

Under the new provisions:

- Uzbek citizens who have been abroad for more than 90 days will be required to undergo an HIV test upon return.
- All non-citizens seeking to work in Uzbekistan will be required to undergo an HIV test, paid for out-of-pocket unless covered by their employer.
- Any non-citizen who tests positive will be denied a work permit or have an existing permit revoked, effectively excluding people living with HIV from lawful work and residence.

Officials claim this measure will prevent the spread of HIV. However, decades of global public health experience and scientific evidence show that coercive, punitive, and discriminatory measures do not prevent HIV transmission – they drive it underground.

### **Why this law is harmful and unjust:**

#### **It violates the right to informed consent and bodily autonomy**

HIV testing must always be voluntary, with informed consent, counselling, and confidentiality. Mandatory testing strips individuals of autonomy and treats certain groups as potential threats simply because of their travel history or nationality.

#### **It discriminates based on nationality and health status**

Barring non-citizens with HIV from working or residing in Uzbekistan is a clear case of discrimination. Such measures are condemned by the United Nations, which has called on all countries to remove HIV-related travel and residency restrictions as they have no public health justification.

### **It imposes punitive consequences**

Denying work and residence to people living with HIV is a punishment based solely on health status. This is akin to the logic of HIV criminalisation: treating people living with HIV as dangerous rather than as equal members of society. It ignores scientific consensus, including the principle of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U), which confirms that people on effective HIV treatment cannot pass on the virus.

### **It undermines privacy and risks abuse**

The law opens the door to intrusive surveillance and breaches of confidentiality, including possible disclosure to families, employers, or authorities – outcomes that can lead to stigma, discrimination, violence, and loss of livelihood.

### **It targets and harms vulnerable communities**

Migrant workers, women, and other vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by HIV stigma and punitive laws. This policy will further marginalise them, making them less likely to access HIV testing, prevention, and treatment services voluntarily.

## **A better way forward**

HIV testing is an essential part of an effective HIV response – but it must be voluntary, confidential, and accompanied by linkage to care and treatment. The World Health Organization, UNAIDS, and the UN Human Rights Council all recommend against mandatory testing and HIV-related entry, stay, and residence restrictions.

By enacting this law, Uzbekistan would place itself among the small and shrinking number of countries still enforcing discriminatory HIV-related travel and work bans – policies the global community has rejected as counterproductive and contrary to human rights.

## **Our call to action**

We urge the President of Uzbekistan not to sign this law and instead to:

- Uphold the principles of voluntary, informed consent for HIV testing;
- Remove discriminatory provisions that exclude people living with HIV from employment or residency;
- Engage with civil society, including people living with HIV, to design evidence-based, rights-affirming HIV prevention strategies;
- Commit to ending HIV-related stigma and discrimination in law, policy, and practice.

We stand in solidarity with all people living with HIV in the country. A just, effective HIV response must be rooted in dignity, equality, and science – not coercion, fear, and exclusion.

Signed,  
HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE coalition members

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### HIV JUSTICE WORLDWIDE

is a coalition of 16 global and regional civil society networks and human rights defenders working to end HIV criminalisation.

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