



Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network | Réseau juridique canadien VIH/sida

L E G A L N E T W O R K N E W S

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Symposium success

Close to 200 activists, policy-makers, researchers and lawyers came together again this year for the Legal Network's second Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights. Among many highlights, attendees heard a stirring keynote address by **Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**, who outlined the case for Canada and other G8 countries to increase their pledges to the Global Fund. Dr. Kazatchkine also gave numerous examples of how the struggle against AIDS must include advocacy for human rights, such as insisting on access to antiretrovirals for people in the developing world and health services such as supervised injection sites for people who use drugs, abolishing laws criminalizing gay men, and closing compulsory drug detention centres where people are abused in the name of addiction "treatment". Listen to Dr. Kazatchkine's speech or read the full text at www.aidslaw.ca/symposium > Public Lecture.

The same evening, we also honoured lawyer **Ralf Jürgens** with the 2010 Canadian Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, presented jointly by the Legal Network and Human Rights Watch. Known by many in the community, Ralf has a long history of advocacy on AIDS and human rights in most regions of the world, including co-founding the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and serving as its Executive Director from 1998 to November 2004. Building on his numerous contributions to HIV/AIDS policy and human rights, Ralf continues his advocacy on a global stage, including on such issues as the human rights of people who use drugs and people in prison or other places of detention. For more about the Awards and past recipients, visit www.aidslaw.ca/awards. (The recipient of this year's International Award for Action will be announced at the upcoming International AIDS Conference in Vienna later this month.)

In addition to the above, Symposium registrants were able to hear from a number of legal and community experts and activists on the criminalization of exposure to HIV, Canadian immigration policy and HIV, women's reproductive rights and housing issues. A full report on the Symposium will be available in the upcoming issue of the Legal Network's *HIV/AIDS Policy & Law Review*. In planning the Symposium's future, your suggestions are sought and welcome — please send any comments about what you'd like to see on the agenda to info@aidslaw.ca.

Year in review

As part of the Symposium program, this year's Annual General Meeting of members was the forum to unveil the Legal Network's **Annual Report** for 2009–2010. Let us know if you would like additional hard copies of the report; you can also consult it at www.aidslaw.ca/annualreport.

"Now More Than Ever"

To date, over 700 HIV/AIDS organizations worldwide, including the Legal Network, have endorsed **Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Now More Than Ever** in an attempt to place human rights at the centre of the global AIDS response. The joint declaration presents ten reasons why protecting human rights is essential to public health, particularly for a disease such as HIV that affects the most marginalized in society.

The *Now More Than Ever* campaign has grown since it was launched at the 2006 International AIDS Conference, and it will again figure prominently during the XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) in Vienna in July, when activists gather for an exciting program of activities in the **Human Rights Networking Zone** in the AIDS 2010 Global Village, co-hosted by the Legal Network and the Open Society Institute, with support from the Levi Strauss Foundation and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. Human rights will also be highlighted prominently during the conference by an historic march, rally and concert for human rights on the evening of Tuesday, July 20. To endorse the declaration and find out more about human rights activities at AIDS 2010, visit www.hivhumanrightsnow.org.

Legal Network in action at AIDS 2010

In addition to hosting the Human Rights Networking Zone, the Legal Network will co-host a satellite session on criminalization with GNP+ and NAM and present its own research and human rights advocacy work at AIDS 2010. Visit www.aidslaw.ca/aids2010 for an overview and details of what the Legal Network is up to at the conference.

Vienna Declaration

The Vienna Declaration is a statement seeking to improve community health and safety by calling for the incorporation of scientific evidence into illicit drug policies. Scientists, health practitioners and the public are invited to endorse this document in order to bring these issues to the attention of governments and international agencies, and to illustrate that drug policy reform is a matter of urgent international significance. The declaration was drafted by a team of international experts and initiated by the International AIDS Society (www.iasociety.org), the International Centre for Science in Drug Policy (ICSDP) (www.icsdp.org), and the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (www.cfenet.ubc.ca). To read the Declaration and endorse it, visit www.viennadeclaration.com.

CAMR campaign

Although Parliament has risen for the summer, we still need you to help build support in Parliament to ensure passage of Bill C-393, a private member's bill which proposes to streamline Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR), created in 2004 to help export lower-cost, generic medicines to developing countries. The bill is slated for study by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology when parliamentarians return to Ottawa this fall. In May, we reported that the Committee had received approximately 2,000 postcards, an unprecedented number. They have now received more than double the amount — some 5,500 postcards! Please keep sending them. To order postcards for distribution at your events or to your members, contact outreach coordinator Lindsey Simms at lsimms@aidslaw.ca.

During the summer, MPs are in their ridings and it's a perfect time to have a conversation with them. Tell them Bill C-393 would help ensure that lower-cost AIDS drugs reach people in developing countries who desperately need them. Our campaign needs your involvement to ensure a stronger base of support for the proposed reforms, in the face of powerful opposition from the brand-name pharmaceutical lobby and some MPs. See how your MP voted previously at the second reading of Bill C-393 (www.aidslaw.ca/camr); let those who voted in favour know you're pleased with their vote, let those who were absent know you want them to support the bill and let those who voted against it know your displeasure and that you're watching. For further details about CAMR and the campaign to fix it, see www.aidslaw.ca/camr.

Global Commission on HIV and the Law

Executive Director **Richard Elliott** has been invited to serve on the Technical Advisory Group assisting the Global Commission on HIV and the Law (<http://www.undp.org/hiv/comissiononhivandthelaw/index.shtml>) recently launched by the UNDP. In April, he attended the first meeting of this advisory group of experts in New York where he reconnected with the Legal Network's former Executive Director, Joanne Csete, also a member of this advisory group which is chaired by retired Justice Michael Kirby, formerly of the High Court of Australia. For a commentary about some of the issues the Commission will address, see this piece by Prof. Matthew Weait (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/jul/02/law-should-not-reinforce-hiv-stigma>), another member of the

advisory group, recently published in *The Guardian*.

New colleague

We had the great pleasure of welcoming **Gennet Campbell** as the Legal Network's new Administrative Assistant. Gennet joined us just before the Symposium, bringing 10 years of experience in governmental, private and not-for-profit sectors and two years of volunteering with the AIDS Committee of Ottawa.

Board changes and elections

We are also very pleased to welcome **Louis Letellier de St. Just** to our board of directors following the recent AGM. Louis is an experienced advocate and has almost three decades of legal practice under his belt, notably in the fields of health and human rights. He is currently board president of CACTUS-Montréal, a community action centre for people who use drugs as well as youth and other marginalized groups. Louis is also a member of the WHO expert committee on Mental Health and Human Rights.

Long-time board member **Le-Ann Dolan** completed her latest term on the Legal Network's board of directors at this year's AGM. Her departure coincides with a change in jobs. Le-Ann has left the AIDS Committee of Toronto in order to start a new position at the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR). Thank you, Le-Ann and good luck with your new professional challenge! Given that we share office space with CWGHR, Le-Ann will no doubt continue to have her finger on the pulse of Legal Network projects.

Homage to Albert

We are saddened by the death of **Albert Martin** which occurred suddenly while he was attending our recent Symposium in Toronto. A long-time advocate for HIV/AIDS, Albert was the founder and director of the news portal and opinion forum *Fréquence VIH*. We offer our most sincere condolences to his family and those to whom he was close, including his former colleagues at *Fréquence VIH*. A memorial service will be held in Chicoutimi on July 12. For details, call 418-545-2643. To send a message of condolence: ange@afdr.info. We hope you will join the Legal Network in making a donation to the designated charity, *Fréquence VIH* (www.frequencevih.ca).

And in closing...

The Legal Network relies on multiple sources of funding in order to carry out its work promoting the human rights of people living with HIV and of communities vulnerable to HIV. Individual donations are a key source of funding that help ensure our independence. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation by visiting www.aidslaw.ca/donate.

About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (www.aidslaw.ca) promotes the human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in Canada and internationally, through research, legal and policy analysis, education, and community mobilization. The Legal Network is Canada's leading advocacy organization working on the legal and human rights issues raised by HIV/AIDS.

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