

WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN UGANDA DO NOT SUPPORT CRIMINALIZATION

We, as women living with HIV in Uganda do not support the criminalization clause in the HIV Prevention and AIDS Control Bill 2010

Our position since 2010 has been the same that criminalization of HIV is bad and therefore, not called for.

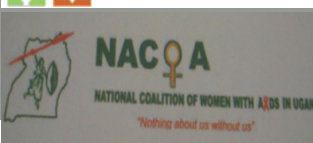
In addition to negatively impacting on the HIV & AIDS response in the country, it will also have adverse impact on women.

Applying criminal law to HIV exposure or transmission does nothing to address the epidemic characterized by gender-based violence or the deep economic, social, and political inequalities that are at the root of women's and girls' disproportionate vulnerability to HIV.

Women will be mostly affected in the following ways;

- *Women will be deterred from accessing HIV prevention, treatment, and care services, including HIV testing for fear of being blamed and prosecuted for bringing the virus to the family*
- *Women are more likely going to be the ones prosecuted for HIV transmission due to power imbalance and since they are more likely to know their status first as they access maternal health care services compared to their male partners*
- *Women will not access the available HIV prevention, care and treatment programs especially eMTCT thus leading to increase in the babies born with HIV in the country*
- *Women will be at greater risk of HIV-related violence and abuse*
- *Criminalization of HIV exposure or transmission does not protect women from coercion or violence.*

We strongly believe that the clause is a very big mistake that is likely to undo all the achievements that the country has so far gained in the HIV&AIDS response.



Together Against AIDS Positive