

(This statement has been organized by DRCNet Foundation (aka "StoptheDrugWar.org"), an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2016.)

We the undersigned condemn President Trump's call to impose the death penalty for drug offenses.¹ The death penalty for crimes other than murder is likely to violate the US Constitution, and the UN has called for a moratorium on executions with the aim of abolishing the death penalty as a whole.²

President Trump's rationale for this policy is premised on falsehoods. The world's two major executors for drug offenses, China as the president cited, and Iran, both have significant drug abuse and trafficking issues. China is a leading source for black market fentanyl and is a major exporter of methamphetamine to the Philippines.³ Iran has a growing addiction rate from widely available Afghan heroin.⁴ Both countries have scaled back their use of the death penalty for drug offenses in recent years, and both have invested significantly in harm reduction programs like syringe exchange and opioid substitution therapy.⁵

The other country President Trump has cited in arguing this position is Singapore. However, the government of Singapore has used essentially faked data to defend its draconian policies to its people and at the UN.⁶ Singapore has drug issues like every other country, and in some ways drug use is becoming more open.⁷

The president has similarly ignored the record of countries like Portugal, the Czech Republic or The Netherlands, where drug use is decriminalized and people seeking help with substance-related challenges have access to an extensive set of carefully conceived programs. All three of these countries have drug use rates in line with other EU member states, and all have seen dramatic reductions in HIV-prevalence and drug-induced fatalities.⁸

We regret that President Trump has lightly set aside the recommendations of his Presidential Commission on Opioids, which called for public health approaches like medication assisted treatment and the overdose antidote naloxone.⁹ Along with the ghastly specter of executions that the president has conjured, there is a cost in lives already today through the administration's politicization of this issue.¹⁰

The president's call on the death penalty follows a record of troubling statements he has made promoting violence. At a gathering of police officers in Nassau County, New York, the president suggested that officers should bash suspects' heads on car door frames while arresting them. The remarks drew condemnation from numerous police leaders, departments and organizations representing law enforcement.¹¹

During the presidential campaign, then-candidate Trump encouraged attendees at his political rallies to beat up protesters, and expressed his own desire to punch or engage in other violence against protesters, such comments being caught on video on seven different occasions.¹²

On at least two occasions, President Trump praised Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's bloody drug war, in which perhaps 20,000 people have been killed extrajudicially in less than two years.¹³ These comments by a US president may have contributed to the initiation of

extrajudicial drug war killings in Indonesia and Bangladesh, or to officials in Malaysia and Turkey calling for similar measures.¹⁴

We call on Republicans and Democrats in Congress to clearly repudiate these words by President Trump; and we call on Attorney General Sessions to rescind his directive encouraging prosecutors to follow that lead.¹⁵ History will judge many of our leaders, not solely the president, should a turn to social barbarism occur during their watch. Congress should also reject the calls made by the President and Attorney General to create new mandatory minimum sentences, but instead press forward with current sentencing reform proposals.¹⁶

Congress should repeal the never used US death penalty statutes for drug offenses.¹⁷ Congress should also pass new legislation to strengthen the connection between US foreign aid and human rights. A first step toward doing so would be to enact a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Marco Rubio (R-FL), S. 1055, "The Philippines Human Rights Accountability and Counternarcotics Act of 2017."¹⁸

– END –

(This list is current as of 6/25/18, and gets updated at <https://stopthedrugwar.org/files/trump-death-penalty.pdf>. Organizations listed without a country are either US, global, or regional. For further information, contact David Borden at borden@drcnet.org or +1 202-236-8620.)

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A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)

Acción Semilla Bolivia

Acción Técnica Social (Colombia)

A FEW International

Alliance-Philippines (Alliance for Just and Lasting Peace In the Philippines)

APCASO (Asia-Pacific)

APDES - Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (Portugal)

Asian Network of People Who Use Drugs

Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas (ACEID) (Costa Rica)

Association for Humane Drug Policy (Norway)

The Association for Safer Drug Policies (Norway)

Assonabis (Spain)

ASUD (Autosupport des Usagers de Drogues) (France)

Bantay Pilipinas-USA

Beckley Foundation (United Kingdom)

Blacks in Law Enforcement of America

Broken No More

Canadian Drug Policy Coalition

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Cannabis Sans Frontières (France)

The Center for Community Alternatives (New York)

Center for Law and Justice (New York)

Center for Living and Learning (California)
Center for Optimal Living (New York)
Centro Cáritas de Formación para la Atención de las Farmacodependencias y Situaciones Críticas Asociadas A.C. (CAFAC) (Mexico)
Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género, Corporación Humanas (Chile)
Chicago Recovery Alliance
Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign (Ireland)
Chicago Recovery Alliance
Coalition Against the Death Penalty (Philippines)
Coalition to Defend Immigrant Rights (CDIR)-Los Angeles
Community Alliance on Prisons – Hawai'i
Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW) Project (Honolulu)
Corporación Humanas Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género (Colombia)
Death Penalty Focus
Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+) (India)
Denver Relief Consulting
Drug Policy Alliance
Deutscher Hanfverband (DHV) - German Cannabis Association
Dianova International
Drug Policy Advocacy Group (Myanmar)
Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i
Drug Policy and Harm Reduction Platform in Malawi
Drug Salvation Foundation (Nigeria)
Drug Users Union MDHG, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
Echo Park Community Coalition (Los Angeles)
Ecumenical Advocacy Network on the Philippines
Empire State NORML (New York State Chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws)
FAAAT.net - French Alternatives on Addiction and Toxicomanies (France, Spain)
Families for Sensible Drug Policy (FSDP)
Family Council on Drug Awareness
FedCURE
Federación Andaluza Enlace (Spain)
Fedito Bxl - Drugs & Addictions Brussels
Fields of Green for ALL NPC (South Africa)
Filipino American Human Rights Alliance (FAHRA)
FORCE (Filipino Overseas Rights and Constitutional Equality)
Forum Droghe (Italy)
Free Legal Assistance Group (Philippines)
Fundacja Polityki Społecznej PREKURSOR (Poland)
Global Exchange
Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)
Golden Gate University School of Law Students for Sensible Drug Policy
GRASP: Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing
Harm Reduction Coalition
Health Poverty Action

Help Not Handcuffs (New Jersey)
Hep Free Hawaii
Hepatitis Education Project
Housing Works
Human Rights and the Drug War
iDEFEND (In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement) (Philippines)
Institute of Inner Balance (Slovenia)
Institute for Policy Studies Drug Policy Project
Integración Social Verter A.C. (Mexico)
Intercambios Puerto Rico
International Center for Ethnobotanical Education Research & Service, ICEERS Foundation
(Spain, Uruguay)
International Centre for Science in Drug Policy
International CURE
International Drug Policy Consortium
Jewish Social Policy Action Network (JSPAN)
The John Mordant Trust (United Kingdom)
Justice for Filipino American Veterans (JAFV)
Justice Strategies
Just Say No Nepal
La Società della Ragione (Italy)
Latino Commission on AIDS
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Lawyers Collective (India)
Legalizziamo.it
Luca Coscioni Association for Freedom of Scientific Research (Italy)
Mainline (Netherlands)
Malawi Women's Coalition Against Cancer
Marijuana Policy Project
Middle East and North Africa Network of/for People who use Drugs (MENANPUD)
mommieactivist and sons Online Radio
Moms United to End the War on Drugs
Moms Stop The Harm (Canada)
mumsDU -- moms united and mandated to saving the lives of Drug Users (Canada)
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
National Lawyers Guild, Drug Policy Committee
National Organization for Women
Netherlands Drug Policy Foundation
The Next Movement
NoBox Transitions Foundation Inc. (Philippines)
Normal Norge (Norway)
NORML of Michigan
NVO 4 Life (Montenegro)
Observatorio de Cultivos y Cultivadores Declarados Ilícitos (OCCDI) (Colombia)

Philippine Jesuit Prison Service Foundation, Inc.
 Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
 PNNY Peer Network of New York
 Protect Families First (Rhode Island)
 Public Justice Center (Maryland)
 Quad Cities Harm Reduction (Iowa)
 Recovering Nepal, National Federation of People Who Use Drugs and Drug Service Organizations
 REDUC - Brazilian Harm Reduction and Human Rights Network
 Reentry Central
 Release (United Kingdom)
 Safe Streets Arts Foundation (District of Columbia)
 SAOL Project (Ireland)
 SATHI SAMUHA; Community-led Organization of Positive People Who Use Drugs in Nepal
 Schildower Kreis (Germany)
 Sex Workers and Allies Network (SWAN)
 Sonoran Prevention Works (Arizona)
 South African Network of People Who Use Drugs
 St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction, Inc. (Bronx, NY)
 StoptheDrugWar.org
 Students for Sensible Drug Policy
 SURUWAT (Nepal)
 TB/HIV Care Association (South Africa)
 TNI (Transnational Institute)
 Transform Drug Policy Foundation (United Kingdom)
 Treatment Action Group
 UDK Consultancy (Malawi)
 UNAD (La Red de Atención a Las Adicciones) (Spain)
 UP-Paralegal Volunteers Organisation (Philippines)
 Urban Survivors Union (California, North Carolina, Washington State)
 William C. Velasquez Institute
 WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America)
 Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)
 Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN)
 Women Who Never Give Up
 Youth RISE
 Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network

¹ Wayne Drash, *Trump's Death Penalty Plan for Drug Dealers a 'step Backwards,' Experts Say*, 2018 CNN, Mar. 20, 2018 at (2018), <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/19/health/trump-death-penalty-drug-traffickers-reaction/>.

² Vanessa Schipani & Robert Farley, Q&A: *The Death Penalty for Drug Trafficking?*, FACTCHECK.ORG, Apr. 5, 2018 at <https://www.factcheck.org/2018/04/qa-the-death-penalty-for-drug-trafficking/>; GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL CALL FOR MORATORIUM ON EXECUTIONS, WITH VIEW TO ABOLISHING DEATH PENALTY, UNDER TERMS OF RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THIRD COMMITTEE (United Nations Meetings Coverage & Press Releases 2012), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/gashc4058.doc.htm>.

³ Reuters in Washington, *Chinese Labs Use Mail to Send Opioid Fentanyl into US, Senate Report Finds*, REUTERS, Jan. 24, 2018 at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/24/chinese-labs-use->

[mail-to-send-opioid-fentanyl-into-us-senate-report-finds](#); John Chalmers, *Bad Chemistry: Meth Gangs of China Play Star Role in Philippines Drug Crisis*, REUTERS, Dec. 16, 2016 at <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/philippines-drugs-china/>.

⁴ *Iran's Drug Problem: Addicts 'more Than Double' in Six Years*, BBC NEWS, June 25, 2017 at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40397727>.

⁵ Leon Whyte, *Drug Use, HIV and a Harm Reduction Model for Northern China*, THE DIPLOMAT, Nov. 22, 2015 at <https://thediplomat.com/2015/11/drug-use-hiv-and-a-harm-reduction-model-for-northern-china/>; SUBSTITUTION THERAPY IN IRAN – ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS FAIRY TALES?(Eurasian Harm Reduction Network Dec. 16, 2016), <http://www.harm-reduction.org/blog/substitution-therapy-iran-one-thousand-and-one-nights-fairy-tales>; A report by Iran Human Rights found no executions for drug offenses in Iran from November 2017 until one was done on May 10: Iran Execution Trends Six Months After the New Anti-Narcotics Law (Iran Human Rights 2018), <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/3325/>.

⁶ Rick Lines, *Trump Take Note – Why Singapore's Claim that the Death Penalty Works for Drug Offences Is Fake News*, THE CONVERSATION, Mar. 19, 2018 at <http://theconversation.com/trump-take-note-why-singapores-claim-that-the-death-penalty-works-for-drug-offences-is-fake-news-92305>.

⁷ *Drug Use Among the Young: Abusers Getting More Brazen*, THE STRAITS TIMES, June 26, 2017 at <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/abusers-getting-more-brazen>.

⁸ *Drugs in Europe: Not Mind Stretching Enough*, ECONOMIST, June 18, 2016 at <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21700648-liberal-drug-policies-have-spread-across-europe-some-early-adopters-are-slipping-behind-not>.

⁹ German Lopez, *A Member of Trump's Opioid Commission Calls Its Work "a Charade"*, Vox, Jan. 23, 2018 at <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/1/23/16923188/trump-opioid-commission-kennedy-sham-charade>; THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON COMBATING DRUG ADDICTION AND THE OPIOID CRISIS 70, 77 (The White House Nov. 1, 2017), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Final_Report_Draft_11-1-2017.pdf.

¹⁰ Brianna Ehley & Sarah Karlin-Smith, Kellyanne Conway's 'opioid Cabinet' Sidelines Drug Czar's Experts, POLITICO, Feb. 6, 2018 at <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/06/kellyanne-conway-opioid-drug-czar-325457>.

¹¹ Cleve R. Wootson Jr. & Mark Berman, *U.S. Police Chiefs Blast Trump for Endorsing 'police Brutality'*, WASH. POST, July 30, 2017 at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/07/29/u-s-police-chiefs-blast-trump-for-endorsing-police-brutality/>.

¹² *All the Times Trump Has Called for Violence at His Rallies*, MASHABLE DAILY, Mar. 16, 2016 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wls2L2nUL-0>.

¹³ Ivan Watson, *Duterte: Trump Says Philippines Tackling Drug Problem 'the Right Way'*, CNN, Dec. 3, 2016 at <https://www.cnn.com/2016/12/03/politics/trump-duterte-phone-call/>; OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY, READOUT OF PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP'S CALL WITH PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE OF THE PHILIPPINES (The White House Apr. 29, 2017), <https://web.archive.org/web/20170501201843/https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/04/29/readout-president-donald-j-trumps-call-president-rodrigo-duterte>; Lian Buan, *Supreme Court: Drug War Deaths May Mean Gov't Behind Killings*, RAPPLER, Apr. 11, 2018 at <https://www.rappler.com/nation/200042-supreme-court-war-on-drugs-state-sponsored-killings>.

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¹⁵ Jack Crowe, *Sessions Instructs Prosecutors to Seek Death Penalty for Drug Dealers*, NAT'L REV., Mar. 21, 2018 at <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/03/sessions-instructs-prosecutors-to-seek-death-penalty-for-drug-dealers/>.

¹⁶ Matt Lasio, *Fentanyl, Mandatory Minimums and the Death Penalty: Trump's War on Drugs*, ROLLING STONE, Mar. 28, 2018 at <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/features/fentanyl-mandatory-minimums-death-penalty-trump-war-on-drugs-w518495>; Lydia Wheeler, *Prison Sentencing Bill Advances Over*

Sessions Objections, THE HILL, Feb. 2, 2018 at <http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/374045-prison-sentencing-bill-advances-over-sessions-objections>.

¹⁷ The primary statute is (18 U.S.C. § 3591(b)), which applies to some drug trafficking offenses. There are other statutes allowing the death penalty for murders committed as part of illegal drug activity, some which may extend liability for a murder to participants who were involved in the drug operation but not the murder itself; FEDERAL LAWS PROVIDING FOR THE DEATH PENALTY, Death Penalty Info. Ctr., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/federal-laws-providing-death-penalty>.

¹⁸ The Philippines Human Rights Accountability and Counternarcotics Act of 2017, S. 1055, Cong. (2017) at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1055>.