

News release

Date:



[www.countthecosts.org](http://www.countthecosts.org)

## Prison Governors Association criticises the War on Drugs and calls on government to explore alternatives

**This week the Prison Governors Association became the latest organisation to sign up in support of an international initiative that calls upon the government to “quantify the unintended negative consequences of the current approach to drugs, and assess the potential costs and benefits of alternative approaches”.**

50 Years of the War on Drugs – Time to Count the Costs, is a global project that has the support of nearly 70 NGOs around the world and two former presidents.

### **Eoin McLennan-Murray of the PGA said:**

“The blanket prohibition on class A drugs allows criminals to control both the supply and quality of these drugs to addicts who turn to crime to fund their addiction. The Prison Governors' Association believe that a substantial segment of the prison population have been convicted of low level acquisitive crimes simply to fund that addiction.

The current war on drugs is successful in creating further victims of acquisitive crime; increasing cost to the taxpayer to accommodate a higher prison population and allowing criminals to control and profit from the sale and distribution of Class A drugs. A fundamental review of the prohibition-based policy is desperately required and this is why the Prison Governors' Association are keen to support the 'Count the Costs' initiative.”

### **Martin Powell, co-ordinator of the Count the Costs initiative said:**

“We are delighted the Prison Governors Association - whose members witness the day to day futility of the UK's current enforcement-led approach to drugs - is supporting the global Count the Costs initiative. Increasingly, those involved in

picking up the pieces of our failed war on drugs want to see alternatives to prohibition explored. The coalition should heed the PGA's call, and commission a comprehensive policy review as a matter of urgency."

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes for Editors:**

### **Supporters of the Count the Costs initiative include:**

Human Rights Watch, the Howard League for Penal Reform, the International AIDS Society and the Washington Office on Latin America.

**Fernando Henrique Cardoso**, Former President of Brazil

**Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León**, Former President of Mexico and Director of the Yale Centre for the Study of Globalization

**Michael Kazatchkine**, Former director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

**Sir Richard Branson**, Founder and chairman of Virgin Group

### **For the full list of supporters see:**

<http://www.counthecosts.org/supporters>

### **At the PGA Conference in 2010 the following motion was passed:**

*"This conference believes that the current "War on Drugs" is expensive and ineffective and mandates the NEC to engage with the prisons minister to consider other ways of tackling the drugs problem both within prisons and the wider community."*

<http://tinyurl.com/c3jcd3h>

### **A recent letter organised by rap mogul Russell Simmons attracted a wide range of signatories, including:**

Susan Sarandon, Justin Bieber, Harry Belafonte, Cameron Diaz, Jim Carrey, Will Smith, Ron Howard, Mark Wahlberg

<http://globalgrind.com/endthewarondrugs/>