



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Global Fund to end funding for HIV services in drug treatment centres in Viet Nam -

The Global Fund will cease funding HIV treatment services operating in compulsory drug treatment centres in Viet Nam.

When it signed an \$85 million HIV grant with the country's Ministry of Health in May 2013, the Global Fund said its support for services provided at the drug treatment centres was contingent on the identification by government of an international, independent NGO to monitor conditions in the centres. Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other organisations have expressed concerns about human rights abuses in the centres, including forced labour and inhumane treatment of detainees. (See [GFO article](#))

In mid-December, the Global Fund's director of communications Seth Faison told GFO that the Fund has informed the Vietnamese government it is not prepared to accept its proposed scheme to have the Vietnamese Red Cross visit some of the centres twice a year. "We intend within the next six months to negotiate an exit strategy and to reprogram our funding outside of [the drug treatment] centers," Mr Faison said.

The Global Fund has been financing HIV treatment at the centres for about 900 patients, and intends to divert this funding to a similarly sized cohort of patients outside. The Fund is also seeking a commitment from the government that it will fund the treatment of patients inside the centres.

"Given the concerns the Global Fund has expressed about drug detention centers in the past, we believe this will enable the Global Fund to uphold [its] institutional commitment to not funding interventions that infringe on human rights," Mr Faison said.

The Fund has joined UN agencies and other international organisations in publicly calling for the closure of the centres.

“The Government of Vietnam has repeatedly expressed its willingness to transform and renovate [the] centers into community-based treatment centers,” Mr Faison said. “The ‘renovation plan’ in question has been redrafted seven times and has not yet been approved by the office of the deputy prime minister.”

Mr Faison added that the Global Fund has not yet seen a final version of the plan.

Joe Amon, director of Health and Human Rights at HRW, said that the decision by the Global Fund to end funding inside treatment centres “is the right one.” However, he said, “to date, and even with the promise of millions of dollars of donor funding, not a single detainee has been released, not a single centre has been shut down, and forced labor continues to be the mainstay of drug dependency treatment in Viet Nam. The plan that the government of Viet Nam has proposed envisions 10,000 drug users in compulsory treatment centers in 2020. This is not a plan towards closure. It is the continuation of a flawed, failed and abusive approach to drug use that violates fundamental human rights.”

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