



Mr. Volker Türk
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

January 1, 2026

Urgent Call for UN Renunciation of Cannabis Prohibition: Coordinating Action on Systemic Human Rights Violations and Rule of Law Failures

Dear High Commissioner Türk,

On behalf of the Alliance for Rights-Oriented Drug Policies (AROD), I write to escalate our advocacy on the systemic rule of law crisis caused by cannabis prohibition, building on our unanswered submissions to UN mechanisms since 2018. These include our 2019 input to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), our 2018 report to the Human Rights Committee documenting large-scale ICCPR violations, and recent letters to Special Rapporteurs on Arbitrary Detention, Health, Torture, Judicial Independence, and Truth/Justice (July 2025–January 2026). This inertia underscores the need for your office's coordination to address prohibition's violations of rights to liberty (ICCPR Article 9), health (ICESCR Article 12), and fair trials (ICCPR Article 14). In alignment with your 2023 report (A/HRC/54/53),¹ which recommends responsible regulation to protect health and undermine illegal markets, we submitted a communication to the ICC on December 29, 2025, alleging prohibition as crimes against humanity. We implore your leadership to coordinate UN action and advocate for explicit renunciation, preventing further harms like arbitrary detention and judicial sabotage in Norway/CoE systems.

Factual Background: A Regime of Moral Panic and Systemic Harm

Cannabis prohibition, imposed globally through UN conventions and enacted domestically in Norway since the 1960s, has inflicted profound and enduring harm without yielding demonstrable public health benefits. Far from fostering a safer world, this regime equips tyrants with potent tools for social control and empire-building, while systematically eroding open societies and the rule of law. As meticulously documented in our publications *Human Rising: The Prohibitionist Psychosis and Its Constitutional Implications* (2020) and *To Right a*

¹ A/HRC/54/53 (2023), in which you recommend responsible regulation of drug markets to protect health and undermine illegal economies.



Wrong: A Transpersonal Framework for Constitutional Construction (20216), alongside our 2025 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, the "war on drugs" has devastated justice systems worldwide. Mirroring witch hunts of the 15th to early 18th centuries, Nazi campaigns of the 1940s, and South Africa's apartheid regime, it emerges as an ideological construct fueled by fear and delusion that overwhelms reason and corrupts justice. By warping the natural law of supply and demand into a divisive narrative of victims and aggressors, jurists have become instruments of oppression, and prohibition incarnates Voltaire's prescient warning: those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.

These atrocities stem directly from the utopian ideal of a "drug-free society," which anchors policies in extremist wishful thinking rather than empirical reality. In Norway, around 1 million punitive sanctions have been imposed over 60 years, fueling a 1.75 billion NOK black market and approximately 300 annual overdose deaths while disproportionately affecting marginalized groups. Judicial failures—such as the Norwegian justice system's 17-year denial of effective remedies since 2008 and the ECtHR's dismissals in *Mikalsen v. Norway* (2012, 2023, 2024) as "manifestly ill-founded" without reasoned analysis—have entrenched impunity, violating ECHR Articles on liberty, fair trials, and non-discrimination. Similarly, in the United States, over 100 constitutional challenges have been mishandled by justice systems, rejecting liberty claims under flawed reasoning and perpetuating systemic bias (see AROD's submission to ICC, Appendix B, *To Right a Wrong*, part three). As underscored in A/HRC/47/40,² these practices erode judicial independence, fair trial rights, and non-recurrence guarantees, aligning with your mandate's focus on preventing bias and ensuring accountability in legal systems. On a global scale, our Report estimates 400,000 annual deaths and 5 million wrongful imprisonments, sustaining a \$300–500 billion illicit market that exacerbates violence and corruption. Expert analyses like NOU 2002:4, NOU 2019:26, and PACE Resolution 2277 (2019) confirm inefficacy, yet CoE bodies ignore appeals since 2012. Moral panic persists despite professional opposition, perpetuating mass-scale death, disease, stigmatization, and societal unrest without UN coordination to enforce renunciation.

The UN's Role in Perpetuating Violations

The UN's single convention framework has not only resisted adaptation to evidence-based reforms—evident in countries like Germany (2024 legalization), Canada, and Uruguay—but has actively upheld this regime, contravening human rights commitments under the ICCPR and ICESCR. Despite A/HRC/47/40's recommendations for decriminalization and your 2023 report urging regulation to protect health, the UN's inertia sustains these violations. Norway

² A/HRC/47/40, "Arbitrary detention relating to drug policies" (July 2021), to which AROD contributed via our submission on civil society perspectives, available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/Call/CSOs/Alliance_for_rights-oriented_drug_policies.pdf.



and CoE justice systems have sabotaged AROD's truth and reconciliation mission through biased rulings, denying reparation and non-recurrence. This demands your office's coordination to advocate for explicit renunciation, enabling sustainable development and human dignity.

Request for Action

We urge your office to:

1. Publicly advocate for the UN to renounce cannabis prohibition as incompatible with human rights, emphasizing its contribution to systemic violations and rule-of-law erosion, in line with A/HRC/47/40 and A/HRC/54/53, while coordinating with relevant Special Rapporteurs.
2. Recommend a comprehensive UN review of drug conventions, incorporating:
 - a. Truth and reconciliation mechanisms to document harms, ensure reparation, and address Norway/CoE judicial sabotage;
 - b. Guarantees of non-recurrence through decriminalization, alternatives to incarceration, and responsible regulation of drug markets to dismantle black markets, reduce youth criminality, and protect public health.
3. Issue a thematic report or statement addressing prohibition's violations, drawing on our evidence, the ICC submission, and WGAD findings for global mobilization, including post-2021 events like Germany's legalization and Colombia's 2025 advocacy.

AROD stands ready to provide further documentation, including our full ICC complaint and annexed materials, available at <https://www.arodpolicies.org/international-criminal-court-submission>. We enclose copies of our July 2, 2025 letter, 2019 WGAD submission, 2018 HR Committee report, and the ICC communication for your reference. As moral panic continues to undermine justice systems worldwide, confronting this crisis through your office can propel the UN toward evidence-based policies that uphold human dignity and the rule of law. We await your prompt response and collaboration to terminate this era of systemic injustice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Roar Mikalsen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Roar' and last name 'Mikalsen' clearly distinguishable.

Roar Mikalsen

President of the Alliance for Rights-Oriented Drug Policies (AROD)