



DECRIMINALISATION OF DRUGS FOR PERSONAL USE

THE VUSUBUNTU COALITION

is a South African coalition advocating for the decriminalisation of drugs for personal use through approaches grounded in human rights, public health, dignity, and the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The name reflects our belief that every person deserves to be visible, valued, and treated as a full member of society.

VISION STATEMENT

A South Africa which is safe, healthy, and inclusive. A society where no person is criminalised for their drug use. Our country's response to drug use is rooted in compassion, evidence, health, human rights, and social justice. Decriminalisation of all drugs for private purposes is a move towards an ethical and constitutional imperative that reduces public harm, increases access to health and social services and may ease the burden on our criminal justice system. Together, with government, civil society, private sector, and the people most affected, we can endeavour to dismantle stigma, prevent disease, and redirect public resources to affirm public health, human rights and safety.

**DRUG USE SHOULD BE A
SOCIAL, HEALTH AND
RIGHTS ISSUE, NOT A CRIME.**

WHAT IS DRUG DECRIMINALISATION

Criminalisation



People can be arrested, prosecuted, put in jail or given a criminal record for possessing or using drugs.

Decriminalisation



People are NOT arrested or given criminal records for possessing small amounts of drugs for personal use. Drugs do not become a legal commodity.

Legalisation



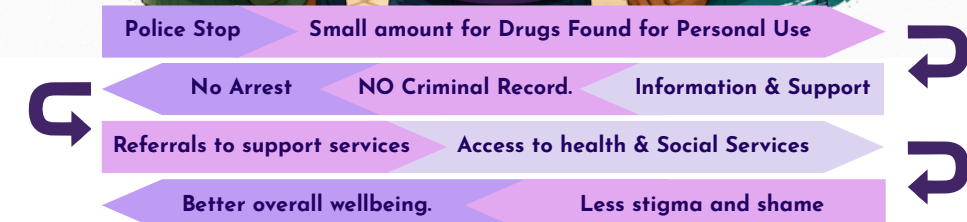
The government creates legal rules for producing and buying drugs.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER DECRIMINALISATION

CURRENT SITUATION: THE CRIMINAL PATHWAY



FUTURE SCENARIO UNDER DECRIMINALISATION



MYTH VS FACT

MYTHS

Decriminalisation means drugs become legal

MYTHS

Everyone will start using drugs if drug use is decriminalised

MYTHS

People who use drugs are a danger to society

FACTS

Supply and sale of drugs are still criminal offences. Only possession of small amounts and use is decriminalised

FACTS

Evidence from countries that has decriminalised shows no major increases in drug use. Portugal saw drug use remain stable or decline

FACTS

People who use drugs can be productive, supportive members of society if the cycle of criminalisation is broken and replaced with rights-based health and social service



WHY DECRIMINALISATION IS IMPORTANT

Decriminalisation is not about promoting drug use. It is about treating drug use as a health and social issue and protecting the rights and dignity of all people in South Africa.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

PEOPLES WHO USE DRUGS HAVE RIGHTS,
EVERY PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO:



DIGNITY



HEALTHCARE



EQUAL PROTECTION
UNDER THE LAW



FREEDOM FROM
VIOLENCE



FREEDOM FROM
DISCRIMINATION



RESPECT AND
HUMANE TREATMENT

Drug use does not remove your human rights. Every person is entitled to dignity, care, and equal protection under South African law and the Constitution.

THE GOLD STANDARD OF DECRIMINALISATION

Don't Punish

Remove all sanctions for drug use and related activities.



Support

Promote voluntary access to systems of care and support.



Community engagement

Meaningfully involve people who use drugs.



Redress

Expunge previous convictions for drugs and develop reparations for affected communities.



Compliance

Comprehensively train authorities to ensure implementations and adherence to the decriminalised framework.



Health & rights

Redirect resources away from punitive systems towards rights-affirming services.



Source:

www.idpc.net/decriminalisation

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