

THE IMPACT OF CRIMINALISATION ON SEX WORKERS' VULNERABILITY TO HIV AND VIOLENCE

Criminalisation increases sex workers' vulnerability to violence and HIV, severely inhibiting the health and wellbeing of sex workers globally.

SURVEILLANCE, POLICING AND A CULTURE OF IMPUNITY INCREASE VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE

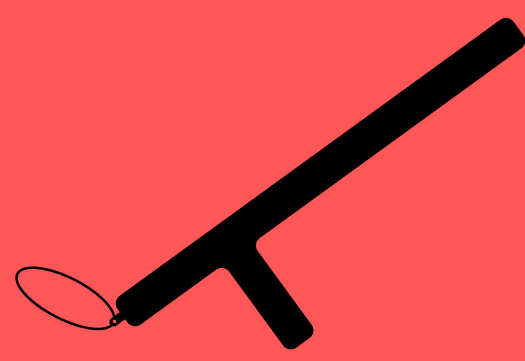
CRIMINALISATION CREATES A CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

Criminalisation reduces the ability to report cases of violence because instead of receiving justice, sex workers are incarcerated for their work.



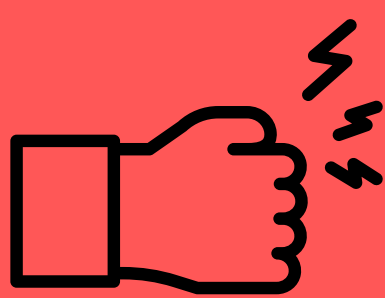
LAW ENFORCEMENT AS PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE

Police are among the main perpetrators of sexual, physical and emotional violence against sex workers. Law enforcers often extort money, information and sex in exchange for sex workers avoiding arrest.



POLICING PRESSURES SEX WORKERS INTO HIGHER RISK SITUATIONS

To avoid arrest, sex workers move into more isolated locations and shorten negotiation times with clients.

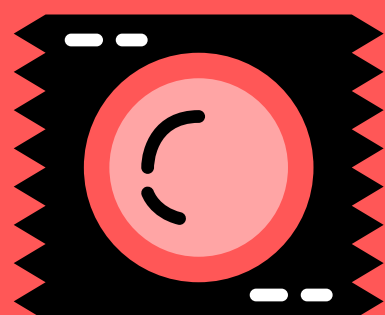
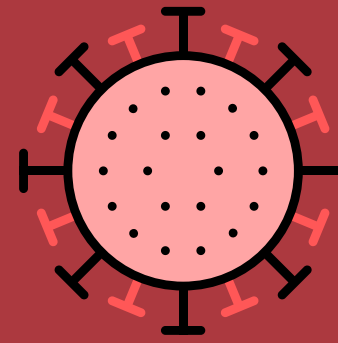


'END DEMAND' POLICIES INCREASE VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE AND HIV

Less demand and less business increases the economic pressure, forcing sex workers to take on more dangerous clients, work longer hours, lower their rates, or engage in unsafe work practices.

SURVEILLANCE AND POLICING INCREASE THE VULNERABILITY TO HIV

Criminalisation raises the level of sexual violence in the workplace, leading to higher rates of HIV / STI infections.



USE OF CONDOMS AS EVIDENCE

In many countries, possessing condoms is enough to warrant an arrest for 'prostitution'. That makes sex workers afraid to have condoms on them, as well as targeting outreach workers who distribute condoms.

CRIMINALISATION AS A BARRIER TO CARE, TREATMENT AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Criminalisation contributes to the stigma and social rejection that fuels human rights abuses, including from service providers. Fear of being turned over to law enforcement prevents sex workers from accessing HIV treatment.



VULNERABILITY DURING ARREST, COURT-INVOLVEMENT AND DETENTION



MANDATORY HIV AND STI TESTING

In many regions, sex workers are subjected to mandatory HIV and health screenings when arrested, another human rights violation that promotes stigma. Results of testing are often disclosed without consent.



IMPACT OF DETENTION ON SEX WORKERS' HEALTH

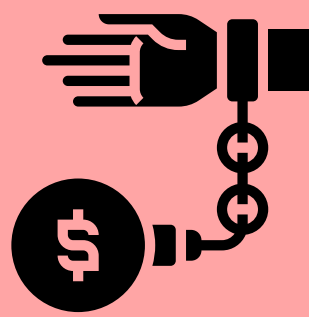
While in detention, sex workers face the possibility of withdrawal or the untreated progression of their medical conditions. For those who are HIV-positive and take ARVs, incarceration without medication makes treatment adherence impossible.



VIOLENCE IN DETENTION

Incarcerated or detained sex workers experience violence at the hands of law enforcement, government officers, and other incarcerated persons.

VULNERABILITY AFTER CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT



Penalisation through fines and other restrictions can create severe financial hardship.



Public shaming and outing as a sex worker can lead to family and community rejection.



Penalisation for sex work can mean additional restrictions, such as being legally prohibited from entering certain neighbourhoods, sex offender registration, etc.



Publicly available records of incarceration can bar individuals from accessing other types of work and other resources including housing.

Full decriminalisation is an integral step to improving the lives of sex workers and upholding human rights, and NSWP urges governments around the globe to take the consequences of continued criminalisation seriously.

SEX WORK IS WORK: SEX WORKERS CALL FOR DECRIMINALISATION!



To learn more on this topic, read NSWP's Policy Brief: **The Impact of Criminalisation on Sex Workers' Vulnerability to HIV and Violence** at: www.nswp.org/resource/the-impact-criminalisation-sex-workers-vulnerability-hiv-and-violence or at <http://bit.ly/nswp-crim>