

## Joint Statement:

Condemning recent raids on the offices and homes of Anand Grover and Indira Jaising

24 July 2019



The Asian Network of People who Use Drugs and the International Network of People who Use Drugs strongly condemn recent raids on the offices and homes of Anand Grover and Indira Jaising of the Lawyers Collective, India. These attacks are emblematic of a broader trend of intimidation, harassment and abuse of power against civil society organisations and advocates who dare to speak out. Democratic space for human rights activism is shrinking, and this cannot continue unchallenged.

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019, India's Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) raided the homes and offices of Anand Grover and Indira Jaising under the pretext of alleged violation of rules under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (2010), widely criticised as a tool to limit and control civil society. The Bar Association of India has condemned the CBI raids as 'excessive, disproportionate and unjustified'.

Anand Grover has been a world-renowned advocate for the human rights of people who use drugs, people living with HIV and key populations and is an outspoken critic of the current government for its nationalism, intolerance of human rights, diversity and minority groups. In 2010, the Lawyers Collective mounted a constitutional challenge through the Bombay High Court to overturn the mandatory death penalty for drug offences and helped draft changes to the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic (Amendment) Act, 2014 to ensure better access to harm reduction services and essential drugs for people who use drugs. During his term as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health (2008-2013), Anand Grover explicitly highlighted criminalisation of drug use as a principal barrier to the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Additionally, he has consistently challenged stigma and discrimination against key populations, highlighting the critical importance of community empowerment and participation in decision-making at all levels of policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

We, people who use drugs, stand in solidarity with Anand Grover and Indira Jaising and demand an end to the enactment and deployment of arbitrary laws and regulations that are used as a smokescreen in silencing dissent and opposition. In an era of rising right-wing populism, fierce and independent advocacy is needed more than ever; attempts to quell legitimate dissent must be called out for what they are. We demand an end to the deliberate harassment and intimidation of Mr. Anand Grover and Ms. Indira Jaising, the staff of the Lawyers Collective and community and civil society advocates.

We urge all those who stand for human rights and democracy to [sign this petition](#) to be submitted to the Indian government on 15<sup>th</sup> of August, India's Independence Day.