Compulsory detention of people who use drugs

We know it is happening but what can we do?

Image: Korsang
Compulsory detention: problems abound

- Human Rights
- Effectiveness
- Public health
- Social
However...
The dilemma: a ‘rotten compromise’
Lessons from other contexts
Thinking about engagement

Overriding principles and guidelines

Image: CHR
Overriding principles

1. Efforts should ultimately focus on closing the centers (and developing evidenced based and voluntary alternatives)
2. Engagement should involve multiple stakeholders
3. Most significant harms should be addressed first
4. If services are provided inside the centers a clear framework needs to be developed and agreed upon
Guidelines for operating inside the centers

1. Focus on providing basic health care and protecting human rights
2. Emergency response not capacity building
3. Un-announced access guaranteed and a monitoring framework agreed
4. Mechanisms to deal with human rights violations and/or poor monitoring outcomes need to be established before engagement
5. A strategy and indicators for disengagement also needs to be established
Remaining ethical quandaries

• Principle of equivalence
  – Should HIV BCC, NSP and/or improved drug treatment be offered in the centers?
• What if closing these centers leads to a worse situation for people who use drugs?
  – Drug users are sent to prison
  – Development of private drug centers
Summary

• Engagement is a must
• Balancing the humanitarian response with the goal of closing the centers
  – avoid making a rotten compromise
• Agreed principles should be established (before engagement commences)
• Maintain flexibility and monitor unintended consequences