Cuba’s HIV Community Asking for Respect, Not Tolerance

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“Use the word respect instead of tolerance or acceptance when referring to HIV-positive people”—that was a message Cuba’s health personnel, HIV experts and people living with the virus delivered at the island’s Scientific Meeting on Integrated Care for HIV/AIDS and the Sixth National Cuban AIDS Prevention Group (GPSIDA) Scientific Event, the Inter Press Service News Agency reports.

“When we speak of tolerance, or acceptance, one party always has the power to decide,” said Carlos Aragonés, national coordinator of GPSIDA. “Respect is something else: I consider myself equal to you; I respect you, and you respect me. People should respect one another.”

According to the article, between 1986 and 2008, the Caribbean island nation has reported 10,454 HIV/AIDS cases, of which men account for 80 percent. GPSIDA hopes that the change in terminology will help Cuba’s HIV community receive the same quality of health care as those living with other diseases.

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