

United Nations reports inequality and austerity deepen global mental health crisis



United Nations, July 8 (RHC)-- Inequality and austerity are exacerbating mental health crisis around the world said a report delivered to the United Nations by Dainius Purasa, a Lithuanian psychiatrist and the U.N.'s special rapporteur on health.

“The profound and dynamic cause and effect relationship between mental health and inequalities compellingly suggest that mental health equity may be an especially important marker of social progress,” the report warns.

The UN expert said the solution to the increasingly widespread mental health crisis lays in the hands of states, as their social and economic intervention could lessen poverty and economic injustice.

Their potential disposition to invest in vital public services could also be more efficient than “the excessive use of psychotropic medication which is happening,” he explained in an interview with The Guardian.

“Cuts to social welfare, laws and policies that restrict access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, the criminalization of drug possession or cultivation for personal use, laws that restrict civil

society space and corporal punishment of children and adults illustrate how governments can directly undermine the promotion of health,” the study points out.

For the experts, promotion and protection of mental health are priority areas, just as every human basic right. They constitute therefore a development priority. However, the exclusive biomedical narrative to explain mental disabilities is too narrowly focused, it negates and puts aside socio-economic situations and de-responsibilizes the states.

Purasa highlights that governments thus have the obligation to join in the effort to protect people's mental health by “creating and sustaining conditions to promote a life of dignity and well being for all.”

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