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Muslim group protests use of condoms to prevent AIDS

SURABAYA: Hundreds of Islamists rallied on World AIDS Day on Tuesday to demand the implementation of syariah to prevent the spread of AIDS rather than condom use.

About 700 members from the Muslim Women of Hizbut Tahrir group staged a rally here, distributing pamphlets on AIDS.

"Using condoms is equal to legalising free sex," Muslim Women of Hizbut Tahrir spokeswoman Febrianti Abassuni said.

"We hope that the government stops the programme and returns to the application of syariah."

Hizbut spokeswoman for the rally Nurul Izzati said it also rejected harm-reduction programmes for drug users.

"It has been proved that harm reduction cannot stop the behaviour of drug users and cannot guarantee that they won't share needles. We also urge the government to close down brothels."

Hundreds of members of the group rallied on Sunday in several cities, including Jakarta, Solo, Yogyakarta and Makassar.

Around 270,000 Indonesians are estimated to be infected with HIV. —AFP