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JAKARTA: Several hundred hardline Muslim protesters staged rallies in Indonesia to urge the government to prevent the spread of HIV by implementing Islamic law.

Ahead of World AIDS Day on Dec 1, members of the Hizbut Tahrir group took to the streets here yesterday and in several cities including Solo, Yogyakarta and Makassar.

"We urge everybody to support the application of syariah in an Islamic caliphate so that, God willing, all of us will be free from the HIV/AIDS threat," Hizbut spokesman Febrianti Abassuni said in a statement.

In the capital, more than 200 female demonstrators urged the government to close down brothels and ban condoms, which they said encouraged "free sex and unhealthy behaviour."

Around 270,000 Indonesians are estimated to be infected with HIV, and AIDS has claimed about 8,700 lives in the Muslim-majority nation of 228 million people, according to the UNAIDS agency.
— AFP



Against it: A protester holding a placard during the AIDS/HIV campaign in Jakarta yesterday.
— AFP