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Beijing students want equality for AIDS patients

BEIJING: About 200 students from 21 universities lit candles in remembrance of those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses at an AIDS candlelight memorial service here.

They also called for equality for those infected with HIV or AIDS at the campaign launched by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the China Red Ribbon Foundation and the China Alliance of People Living with HIV/AIDS at the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE).

"The campaign we launched this year is different from previous ones, as this is the first time we held the memorial on campus," said Ye

Dawei, vice secretary-general of the China Red Ribbon Foundation.

"We hope to unite young people's strength to spread the spirit of caring for AIDS patients and opposing discrimination," Ye said.

Volunteers signed a petition at the event to oppose discrimination against those with HIV or AIDS.

An estimated 780,000 people live with HIV/AIDS in China, including 154,000 AIDS patients.

The International Candlelight Memorial has been held annually on the third Sunday in May, a day dedicated to people who have died of AIDS and those living with HIV, since 1983. — Xinhua