



Wednesday 3 April 2002



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Two-year sex ban urged in Kenya's war on Aids

By Adrian Blomfield in Nairobi
(Filed: 13/07/2001)

THE Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi, has called on his people to abstain from sex for two years to curb the spread of Aids.

He told a pharmaceutical conference that he was embarrassed at the number of condoms his east African country imports. Newspapers quoted him as saying: "As a president, I am shy that I am spending millions of shillings importing those things.

"I will do the best I can, but the solution is to prevent, not to participate," he added, before urging Kenyans to refrain from sex "even for only two years".

Mr Moi's government said this week that it would import 300 million condoms in a bid to fight Aids, which kills an estimated 700 Kenyans every day.

The president's call for abstinence appeared to be falling on deaf ears. Felix Githingi, a computer technician, asked: "How can I do that? Am I not a Kenyan man. There are three important things for a Kenyan man: to drink beer, to eat the meat of the goat and to have sex."

But Mr Moi's call has received support from the Roman Catholic Church and the Islamic community. Both oppose the use of condoms despite the scale of the epidemic.

More than two million Kenyans are infected with HIV out of a population of 30 million.

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