

## Anambra Statewide Condom Ban

Anambra is one of Nigeria's most densely populated states with the 2006 census showing 4.1 million residents. The villages and towns are densely populated with anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 residents living within the confines of each square kilometer. In Nigeria, alone, the HIV epidemic is staggering, to say the least. According to research done by the United Nations program on HIV/AIDS, every year over 300,000 people become infected with HIV only adding to the 3 million people who are already infected. This accounts for almost 4 percent of Nigeria's adult population. So what solution, what remedy can be offered that could perhaps stop the epidemic in its tracks? According to state officials in Anambra, a ban on birth control could be just the right path to take. Amid much controversy and opposition, Anambra's government has issued a ban that would make the promotion, distribution, selling and use of condoms and other forms of "unnatural" birth control like intrauterine devices illegal. In a speech given at the state capital (Awka), the state health commissioner, Amobi Ilika, stated, "Instead of teaching children how to use condoms to enjoy sex they should be taught total abstinence. The use of condoms has greatly encouraged immorality." Naturally, AIDS/HIV activists and family planning groups have much to say against Ilika's statement and the state's new ban. Alphonsus Ofodile, a public affairs analyst states, "Even if you ban the use of condoms, people will still have sex. So why would a responsible government want to discourage safe sex?" He goes on to say that this new condom ban is Anambra's underhanded way of scoring "a cheap political point," hinting that with Anambra's not so peaceful and politically unstable past, the state government is doing all it can in a "desperate attempt to uphold morals." Opponents of the new ban feel the new law may have been put into place largely to appease evangelical organizations throughout the region, since the majority of the population in Anambra is not exactly known to have strong fundamentalist values. The scene in the rest of Nigeria is entirely different. In most other Nigerian states condoms are widely available because the federal government has teamed up with organizations and groups focused on family health in order to distribute them. Even the local media is in on the condom campaign with billboards and radio stations serving up public announcements supporting safe sex. Various religious factions throughout Nigeria have also begun promoting the use of condoms since abstinence-only education has not proven to be the best campaign to stop the HIV epidemic. In addition to this new birth control ban, Ilika went on in his speech to say that "abortion is the greatest crime. [All fetuses] must be allowed to live no matter the circumstances that led to the pregnancy, even rape." If any physician is found issuing an abortion, he or she will be penalized very harshly. Ilika states, "The state government will withdraw the license of any medical personnel who flouts this directive and any hospital will be closed down." For more information visit: [Anambra Statewide Condom Ban](#)

## About the Author

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