

# Malawi bishops endorse circumcision for HIV/AIDS prevention

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February 1 (ENInews)--Roman Catholic bishops in Malawi have endorsed a government move to allow men to get circumcised in hospitals as a prevention measure aimed at HIV/AIDS.

"As a church we are against the use of condoms and recommend male circumcision because it is in line with church teachings," the spokesperson for the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Fr. George Buleya told the media in the capital, Lilongwe, at the end of the bishops' annual plenary meeting.

The church said the decision to allow circumcision was arrived at after it consulted health experts in the church. It said only circumcision done at health facilities like hospitals will be promoted.

"Circumcision can reduce the risk of catching the disease through sexual intercourse. We have examined theological texts and found no opposition to it," said Buleya.

An estimated one million Malawians are living with the virus which causes about 68,000 deaths every year, according to USAID. The prevalence rate of the epidemic has however dropped to 12 percent from about 17.1 percent two years ago following a number of interventions such as condom use.