

Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, Kabaka

AIDS is not a death sentence

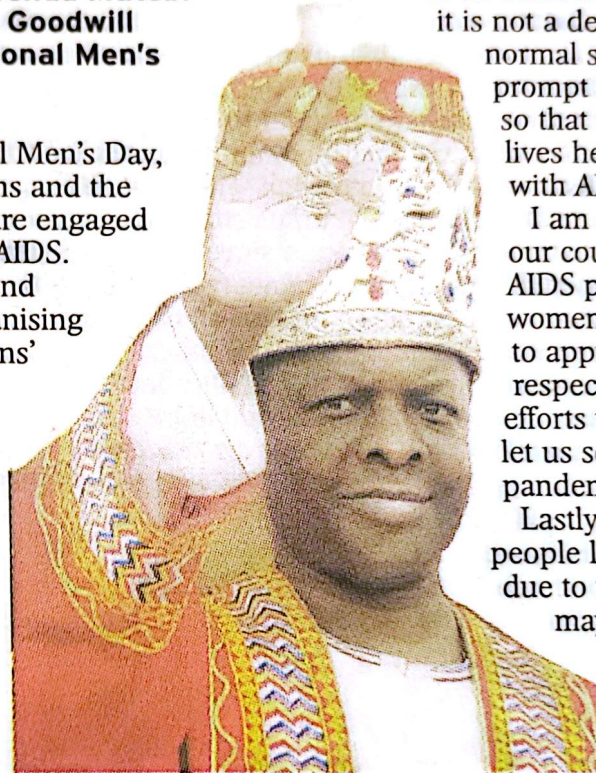
Message from His Majesty, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, the Kabaka of Buganda and UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador for Africa on the International Men's Day

On this occasion of International Men's Day, I wish to thank all organisations and the Government of Uganda who are engaged in our long fight against HIV/AIDS.

I wish to particularly commend Mamas Club, Uganda for organising the events of the week-long International Mens' Day celebrations.

Although a lot of work has been done to decrease the prevalence of HIV/AIDS world-side, the enemy still persists, but my prayer is that through the Presidential Fast Track Initiative, launched in June this year and other efforts, to end AIDS by 2030. We shall see the back of the pandemic within the next decade.

The theme of this year is: *Engaging Men and Boys for a Healthy Nation*. I, therefore, appeal to all the stakeholders to preach the gospel of an AIDS-free Uganda as soon as possible through a relentless counselling and testing campaign. I appeal, especially to our young men to always engage in safe sex through the use of condoms and, if possible, to postpone sexual activities until marriage.



To all those living with AIDS, I wish to empathise that it is not a death sentence. People are nowadays living normal spans of life with AIDS, given the right and prompt treatment. Let us be each other's keeper so that those who are fortunate to live AIDS free lives help instead of ostracising those who live with AIDS.

I am aware of the gender-based violence in our country, which in many ways increases the AIDS pandemic. I appeal to you all; men and women; boys and girls to desist from violence and to appreciate that we are all equal and deserve respect from each other. And as we renew our efforts to eliminate AIDS within a decade or so, let us seek harmony between the sexes to fight the pandemic together.

Lastly, I wish to make a special appeal to our people living on the islands in our country, who, due to the exigencies of their isolated habitations, may take longer to get our messages on HIV/AIDS to turn on their radios and urge opinion leaders there to make sure that these messages get to our people. Our people out there must learn how to fight our common enemy and the weapons with which to do it.

I thank you all who have contributed to the success of international Men's Day in Uganda and all those who for the last 40 years or so have been and are still engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

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