

# Female Genital Mutilation

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# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Terms*

“Practitioners refer to it as female circumcision (FC).

“Some groups oppose the stigma of the word mutilation and prefer female genital cutting (FGC).

“A few organizations have used the combined term female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

“In 1991, the United Nations upon recommendation by World Health Organization (WHO) changed the term from female circumcision to female genital mutilation.

“The terms female genital mutilation (FGM) and female genital cutting (FGC) are now used extensively in the international community.

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Key Facts*

“FGM has no health benefits for girls and women.

“The procedure includes procedures can cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

“Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections and increased risk of newborn deaths.

“FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15.

“FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women (World Health Organization, 2016).

# Female Genital Mutilation

## Definition

According to WHO (2008), female genital mutilation:

*Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (p. 2).*

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Four main types of FGM*

### Clitoridectomy:

“Removing part or all of the clitoris and/or prepuce.

### 2. Excision:

“Removing part or all of the clitoris and the inner labia (lips that surround the vagina), with or without removal of the labia majora (larger outer lips).

### 3. Infibulation (pharaonic):

“Narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a seal, formed by cutting and repositioning the labia.

### 4. Unclassified:

“Other harmful procedures to the female genitals include pricking, piercing, cutting, pulling, scraping and burning the area (World Health Organization, 2016).

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Prevalence*

“UNICEF estimated in 2016 that 200 million women had undergone the procedures in countries in Africa, Indonesia, Iraqi Kurdistan and Yemen.

“Two million girls a year are at risk– approximately 6,000 per day.

“It is also calculated that 100,000 women and teenagers die from complications related to FGM in childbirth every year.

“ Most of the circumcised women have undergone the most severe form of FGM , which involves the stitching and narrowing of the vaginal opening (World Health Organization, 2016).

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Legislation in Africa and the Middle East*

“Throughout the 1990s and 2000s governments in Africa and the Middle East passed legislation banning or restricting FGM.

“By 2016 laws restricting FGM/or prohibiting the practice had been passed in at least 28 African countries in which it was concentrated.

## African Nations: Criminal Legislation/Decree (year enacted)

Benin (2003)

Burkina Faso (1996)

Benin (2003)

Burkina Faso (1996)

Central African Republic  
(1966, amended 1996)

Chad (2003)

Côte d'Ivoire (1998)

Djibouti (1995, amended 2009)

Egypt (2008)

Eritrea (2007)

Ethiopia (2004)

Gambia (2015)

Ghana (1994, amended 2007)

Guinea (1965, amended 2000)

Guinea-Bissau (2011)

Iraq (2011)

Kenya (2001, amended 2011)

Mauritania (2005)

Mali (2002)

Niger (2003)

Nigeria (2015)

Senegal (1999)

Somalia (2012)

Sudan, some states (2008–2009)

South Africa (2005)

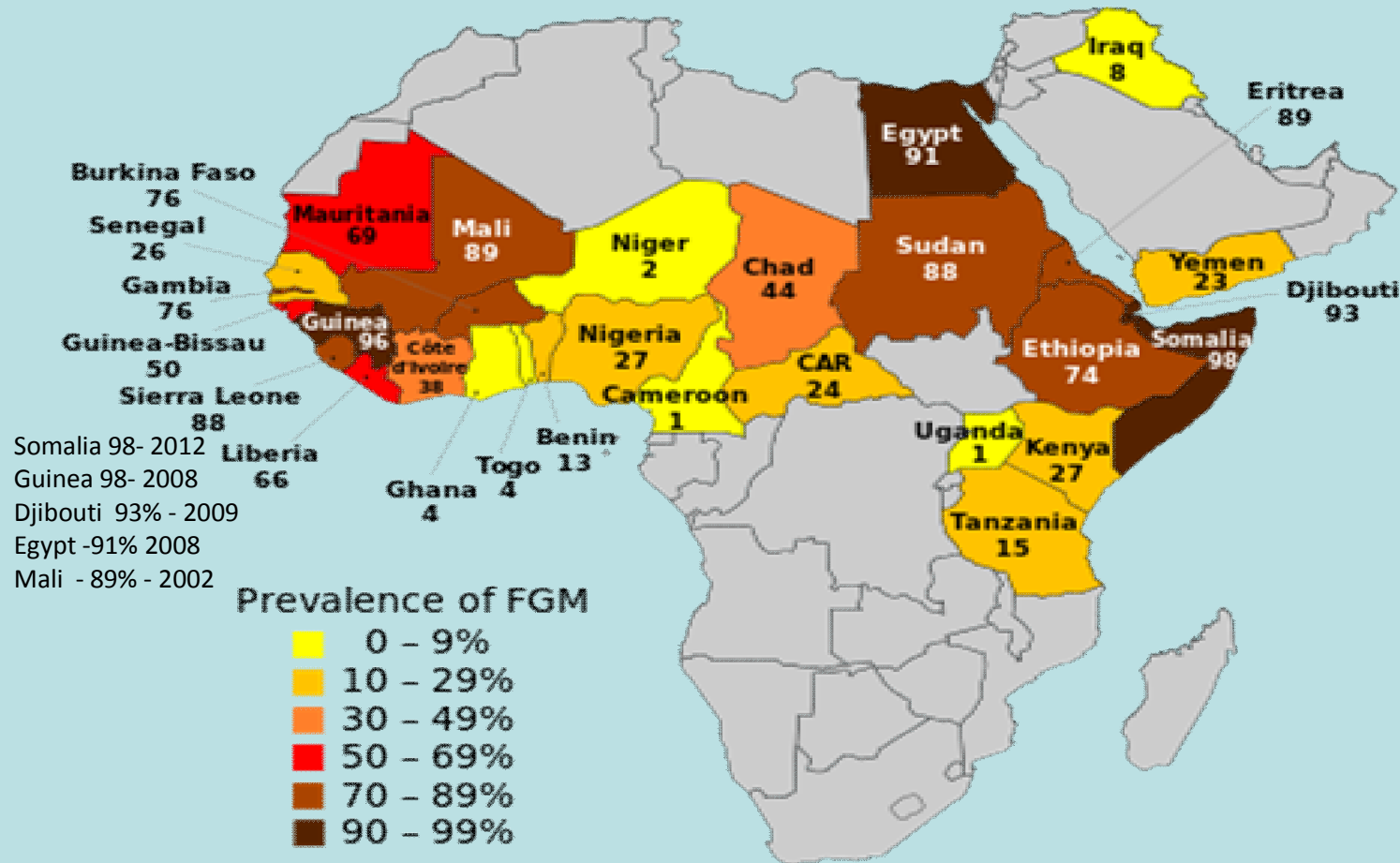
Tanzania (1998)

Togo (1998)

Yemen (2001)



# Female Genital Mutilation



Somalia 98% 2012; Guinea 96%– 2008; Djibouti 93% - 2009; Egypt 91% - 2008; Mali 89% - 2002

# Developed Countries' Response to FGM

## *United States*

"In the United States, in 1996 the Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act made it illegal to perform FGM on minors .

"In addition, 24 states have legislation banning FGM.

## Canada

"In 1997 section 268 of its Criminal Code was amended to ban FGM.

## Australia

"All States and Territories have passed criminal legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation.

## New Zealand

"In January 1996 the Government made the practice of FGM illegal under an amendment to The Crimes Act (section 204A) 1961.

## Europe's Response to FGM

Some countries introduced a specific criminal law to address FGM

Austria

Belgium

Croatia

Cyprus

Denmark

Ireland

Ireland

Italy

Norway

Portugal

Spain

Sweden (first European country to adopt specific legislation on FGM)

Switzerland

United Kingdom

## Europe's Response to FGM

### *FGM Punishable Under Existing Legislation*

In some countries, FGM is prosecutable under general criminal legislation.

“Finland prosecutes FGM as serious assault.

“France as mutilation, Germany as serious and grave bodily harm.

“Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and the Netherlands as either bodily injury or serious bodily injury.

“Luxemburg prosecutes FGM under its voluntary corporal lesion legislation.

All criminal law provisions in these countries consider FGM as very serious.

# Europe's Response to FGM

FGM Punishable Under Child Protection Laws

"Belgium

"Sweden

"Netherlands, and

"Spain

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Principle of Extraterritoriality*

“This principle makes it possible to prosecute the practice of FGM when it is committed outside of a country’s borders.

“Frequently, either the offender or victim, and sometimes both, must be a citizen or, at least, a resident of the country concerned.

“The large majority of EU Member States include this principle in their general criminal law.

“Only Bulgaria, Greece, Malta and Romania do not include the principle of extraterritoriality in their general criminal laws.

“United States (amended law in 2013 to include this). Australia and New Zealand have this principle as well.

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Asylum and Immigration Laws and Regulations*

“Canada was the first country to acknowledge that FGM is a form of persecution and grant asylum.

“Several European countries, such as Austria, Norway, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, and Belgium have granted asylum to young girls or women who feared being subjected to FGM.

## Europe – Female Genital Mutilation

Asylum (EU, 2014)

“UNHCR has estimated that **18,500 of the 25,855 women and girls from FGM-practising countries** seeking asylum in the EU in the first three quarters of 2014 may have been survivors of female genital mutilation.

“The main countries of origin for these women and girls include **Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Guinea and Ethiopia**, most of which have persistently high prevalence rates for FGM.

“The main countries of asylum for women and girls from FGM-practising countries were **Germany, Sweden, France, Switzerland, UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Norway** and – a new entrant into the list – **Denmark**.



## UN Female Genital Mutilation

Asylum (EU, 2013)

“In 2013, over 25,000 women and girls sought asylum in EU.

“Many came from Somalia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iraq, Guinea, Ethiopia, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire.

“They sought asylum mainly in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, France, UK, and Belgium.

## Female Genital Mutilation

### Asylum

“Obtaining asylum is a cumbersome process constructed to weed out fraud.

“Applicants who can present evidence of bodily harm and torture, like survivors of FGM, have a higher rate of success than those seeking relief on the basis of psychological trauma or future persecution.

# UN Female Genital Mutilation

## *Legislation*

“In December 2012, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed resolution A/RES/67/146 condemning the practice of female genital mutilation and encouraging member states to intensify efforts to eliminate this harmful practice.

“The FGM resolution urges countries to condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilations, and to take all necessary measures, including enforcing legislation, awareness-raising and allocating sufficient resources to protect women and girls from this form of violence.

“It calls for special attention to protect and support women and girls who have been subjected to female genital mutilations, and those at risk, including refugee women and women migrants.

# Female Genital Mutilation

## *Prevention*

“Declaring FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

“Complete elimination of FGM through policies that include education, the empowerment of women, and enforcement of laws against FGM.

“FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CULTURE, TRADITION OR RELIGION. IT IS TORTURE AND A CRIME. HELP US TO PUT AN END TO THIS CRIME!!!



INTERNATIONAL DAY  
*of*  
ZERO TOLERANCE  
*for*  
FEMALE GENITAL  
MUTILATION

*February 6*

