



UN Women: Female Genital Mutilation

Email any questions and your position papers to mvhsmununwomen@gmail.com.

I. Background

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the deliberate mutilation of female genitalia. It is usually done for non-medical reasons and is an extremely painful procedure. Genital mutilation is illegal, a form of child abuse, and a major violation of human rights. In the areas where this is performed, FGM is a demonstration of major gender inequality. FGM takes place as a result of the families of these young girls feeling pressured that their daughters have FGM. Cutting takes place in many areas of the world predominantly in some African, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian countries. Statistics show that in the countries of Indonesia, Egypt, and Ethiopia the amount of women who have been cut in those countries count as half of all of the victims of FGM worldwide. In the African country of Somalia, 98% of the population of women from the ages of 15 to 45 have been cut. In these regions, a majority of women have gone through FGM. This act is influenced by religious beliefs, although it is not recommended to practice by any religion; it is thought to be a demonstration of faith. It is also believed that women need FGM to improve their fertility, but this is proven wrong. Additional reasons as to why FGM is given to women is that it is seen as a girl's initiation to womanhood, the outer genitalia of a woman is thought to be ugly, and it is also seen as a way to control a woman's sexuality. There are no benefits to FGM. It only harms the victims. FGM causes many women to be embarrassed and insecure of themselves; and often makes their sex lives unenjoyable, but makes the man's sex life more enjoyable. Many relationships have gone bad due to the frustration of their male spouse, as FGM results in intercourse to be uncomfortable and painful. This procedure is extremely unhealthy for these women and often causes infections, trouble urinating, and terrible bleeding. Most of the victims have no choice and give no consent whether or not this happens to them. More than 200 million women and girls alive today are victims of FGM, and 3 million girls from infancy to adolescence are cut every year.

II. Past UN Involvement

The United Nations has recognized and has become deeply involved with bringing an end to female genital mutilation. They have identified FGM as a major violation to human rights and believe that without it, women will be able to reach their full potential. In September of 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, which are goals aimed to change the world for the better by 2030. One of these goals entails a specific point of bringing FGM to an end on a global scale. This will work to eliminate FGM everywhere by 2030. The UN deemed February 6 as "International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation", a day where FGM is recognized as something that scars women for life. UNFPA and UNICEF have the largest program that generates the abolition of FGM. It currently focuses on 17 African countries where over half of the women living in these areas have undergone some form of mutilation/cutting. This is an extremely sensitive issue that needs to come to an end as a large amount of women and girls worldwide suffer from cutting.



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III. Possible Solutions

The issue of female genital mutilation worldwide has many viable, simple solutions. One solution is to create tougher laws to outlaw this practice. These laws will stress that this process is a violation to human rights and is extremely dangerous. Another solution is to educate people where FGM predominantly takes place and show them the consequences to their actions of cutting these girls. Since FGM is an act of gender inequality, women in the countries where FGM takes place usually do not have very high social status. Non-profits could help to empower these women and girls and increase their social status.

IV. Country Bloc Positions

Western: Since the Enlightenment, the western world has morals focused on liberty, justice, freedom, and most importantly equality. Due to this, FGM does not take place in this area of the world.

Latin: Like the North American and Western European bloc, Latin America has similar beliefs and morals to the western world. They integrate equality into their society. As a result of this, countries in Latin America do not practice FGM.

Middle Eastern: In areas of the Middle East, FGM is practiced. This is because gender inequality is prevalent in these areas due to religion and customs.

Asian: Alike to the Middle East, women are not as equal as men and since FGM is a result of gender inequality, it does happen in areas of Asia. This is also due to religious beliefs in these areas.

African: FGM most predominantly takes place in majority of African countries. Like the Middle Eastern and Asian areas, gender inequality is a large issue in Africa.

V. Guiding Questions

1. Is female genital mutilation justified? Why or why not?
2. Does your nation support genital mutilation? Does it take place in your nation?
3. How can genital mutilation be avoided?
4. What can be done to help the victims of genital mutilation?



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