



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING (6 FEBRUARY 2024)

Her choice. Her Future: Investing in Survivor-Led Moments to End Female Genital Mutilation

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Cutting (FGC) on February 6th raises global awareness and advocates for its elimination. FGC, also known as Female Genital Mutilation, involves the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Recognized as a human rights violation, it poses severe physical and psychological risks for women and girls. This day fosters discussions and campaigns to end FGC worldwide.

FGM prevalence in Somaliland remains persistently high, with little change observed over time (Somaliland Law Report, July 2021). The lack of current and accurate data hampers policy and program development. Somaliland's constitution does not explicitly outlaw FGM, impeding efforts to end the practice

Implementing national legislation is crucial in demonstrating the government's commitment to protecting women and girls and eliminating FGM.

Though challenging, ending FGM in Somaliland requires a multifaceted approach, with legal action being a vital component (Somaliland Law Report, July 2021).

According to the Somaliland Health and Demographic Survey (SLHDS, 2020), the prevalence of FGM/C is extremely high in Somaliland, with 98 percent of women aged 15-49 reported as circumcised.



Ugbad Ahmed Hashi- Programme Manager
NAFIS NETWORK

Observing the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Cutting, we joined the global effort to end FGC and uphold the rights and well-being of women and girls in Somaliland.

The 2024 global theme, "Her choice, Her future. Investing in survivor-led movements to end FGC," resonated with the national theme, "Her Choice, Her Future."

Various initiatives, including legislative changes, community empowerment, healthcare involvement, and international advocacy, have contributed to raising awareness and combating FGC over the years.

Her Choice: Her Future.

At the commemoration, some key speakers talked about the importance of enacting anti-FGC policy and law, including H.E Ali Omer Mohamed, the Minister of Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family, Ahmed Hassan, Director General of the Ministry, Deka Abdi, Director General of Ministry of Parliamentary Relations and Constitutional Affairs, and Amina Elmi, Member of Parliament. In addition to that, persons who are in the international and national NGOs have presented for the approval and implementation of the policy and law will protect to the women and young girls in Somaliland, since they have been involved in advocacy efforts to end FGC.

Trends of FGM in Somaliland

In Somaliland, progress and challenges mark the fight against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Types of FGM practiced have shifted from severe to less invasive forms, reflecting evolving community perceptions. Societal attitudes toward FGM/C have shifted, with increased openness and willingness to address the issue. The government has drafted a national policy and bill to combat FGM/C, recognizing it as a human rights violation and public health concern. Coordination platforms at national and regional levels enhance collaboration among stakeholders.

Psychosocial centers offer holistic support for FGM/C survivors, addressing physical, emotional, and psychological impacts. Youth activism is on the rise, injecting fresh energy and innovation into the movement. Challenges remain, requiring ongoing commitment from all sectors for a future free from FGM/C harms.

Call for action end FGM in Somaliland

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) must actively advocate for the legalization and implementation of an Anti-FGM policy/bill to safeguard the bodily integrity and rights of women and girls.
- Addressing funding gaps is crucial to ensure sufficient resources are allocated towards FGM eradication efforts, including awareness campaigns, survivor support programs, and community empowerment initiatives.



SHG WOMEN IN HARGEISA
Ending FGM Public Declaration event (pic)

- Empowerment of local communities is essential, integrating FGM projects into livelihood programs and humanitarian efforts to address the root causes and social norms perpetuating the practice.
- The government of Somaliland should prioritize legalizing and enacting national legislation that criminalizes all forms of FGM, holding perpetrators accountable, including those involved in medicalized and cross-border FGM.
- Comprehensive support services, including healthcare and economic assistance, should be provided to FGM survivors, recognizing their needs for both physical and emotional recovery.