

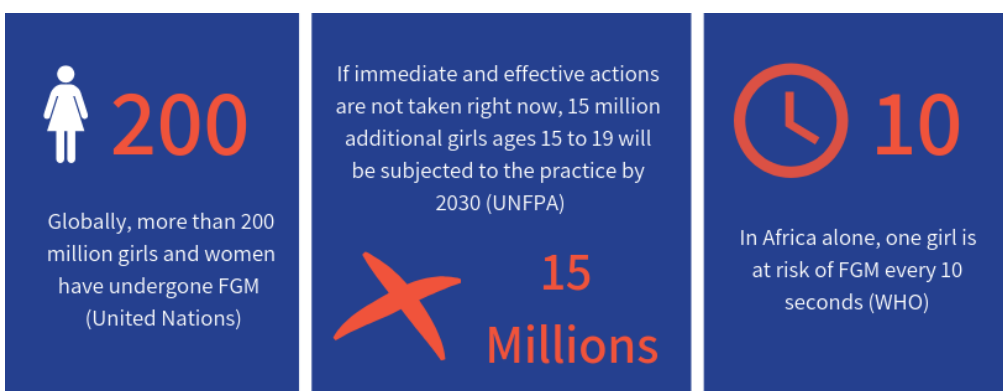


policyUPDATE

Graduate Women International Resolution 6 (2016) - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

What is FGM and the significance of 6 February?

First observed in 2013, the International Day of Zero Tolerance of FGM is an occasion for the international community to enhance awareness and take concrete actions against FGM. FGM comprises “all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women”¹.



GWI Resolution 6 (2016): Our commitment to ending this harmful practice

As a materialization of our organisation’s commitment to end this harmful practice, GWI unanimously passed Resolution 6 on FGM during the 32nd Triennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa in 2016. Through this resolution, GWI affirms that FGM is “an act of extreme violation of the female body. It is an expression of supreme power of man over women’s bodies”.

Of the 30 countries where the detrimental practice of FGM is most prevalent, 11 are countries with GWI affiliated National Federation or Association (NFAs) Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Uganda.



¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

GWI takes part in the global fight towards FGM elimination through our advocacy and awareness-raising work at the international and national levels through our special consultative status with the United Nations, as well as at the grassroots level through the work of our National Federations and Associations (NFAs). As example, the Senegalese Association of University Women has worked closely during the past 10 years with the Senegalese Association of Women Jurists to publicly condemn FGM and call for its elimination as well as to stop gender-based violence.

GWI additionally promotes the elimination of FGM through tough legislative support and the implementation of community-led solutions where local actors and leaders are fully engaged.



In taking part as global citizens in support of the effort to successfully implement the SDGs, GWI continuously calls for renewed effort from all stakeholders to keep the issue of the elimination of FGM on the agenda for sustainable development policies. Indeed, GWI holds that, through its detrimental impact on women's fundamental human rights and the far-reaching consequences on communities, the extreme act of violence that is FGM is a severe barrier to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

What are the causes of FGM?

The causes of FGM include a mix of cultural religious and social factors with families and communities. In most societies, FGM is considered a cultural tradition, a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood. In some communities, female circumcision is linked to marriageability, as is the case with the Maasai and the Samburu communities in Kenya and Tanzania. Where FGM is a social convention, the social pressure to conform to what others do and have been doing is a strong motivation to perpetuate the practice. Additionally, though no faith-based scripts prescribe the practice, practitioners often believe the practice has religious support and religious leaders take varying positions on the issue: while some promote it and consider it relevant to religion, other contribute to its elimination.

International and National Laws on FGM

 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">500</h1> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">More than 500 negotiated and non-negotiated soft laws regarding FGM have been passed by international organisations</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">1</h1>  <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">There is only one legally binding international document related to FGM : the protocol to the African charter on human and peoples' rights on the rights of women in Africa.</p>	 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">59</h1> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">The number of countries in which a law has been officially enacted to make FGM illegal</p>
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FGM: Trends, Prevalence and Evolution

 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">-30%</h1> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">Over the last three decades, FGM rates have declined by 30 per cent.</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">30</h1>  <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">Nevertheless, prevalence remains high in some of the 30 countries with representative data. FGM remains a universal problem as the practice also persists amongst immigrant populations</p>	 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">15</h1> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: white; margin-top: 10px;">Without any specific action to eliminate FGM and if the current trends continue, the number of girls and women subjected to FGM will increase significantly over the next 15 years.</p>
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The relation between the elimination of FGM and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda and its centrepiece, the SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all and are the foundation of a unique, universal and historical call to action to end poverty, inequalities, protect the planet and ensure that everyone can enjoy a peaceful, just and sustainable future. The goals interconnect and in order to *leave no one behind*, each goal must be successfully implemented, and governments held accountable for their success. In order to achieve [all 17 goals](#) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the time is now to address some of the most severe forms of human rights violation that endure to this day, including FGM.

About GWI

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 60 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO. www.graduatewomen.org

GWI operates with a small yet dedicated staff consisting of an Executive Director, a Junior Office Administrator, and a host of committed interns. Further, our work is possible only with the support of our tireless Board of Directors.

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