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**International  
Day of Zero  
Tolerance for  
Female Genital  
Mutilation (FGM)**

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# What is FGM?

**FGM involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.**

It is recognised internationally as a human rights violation and has no health benefits.

The WHO classifies four major types of FGM.

# FGM Type 1

**Type I: Clitoridectomy** involves the partial or total removal of the clitoris, the external, sensitive part of the female genitalia, and/or the clitoral hood, the fold of skin covering the clitoris.

There are two subtypes:

- **Type Ia**, which is the removal of only the clitoral hood (a rare practice), and
- **Type Ib**, which involves the removal of the clitoris along with the hood.

# FGM Type 2

**Type II: Excision** refers to the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, the inner folds of the vulva, with or without the removal of the labia majora, the outer folds of the vulva.

The subtypes include

- **Type IIa**, where only the labia minora is removed;
- **Type IIb**, which involves the removal of both the clitoris and the labia minora; and
- **Type IIc**, where the clitoris, labia minora, and labia majora are all removed.

# FGM Type 3

**Type III: Infibulation** is the most severe form of FGM, characterized by the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the cutting and repositioning of the labia minora or labia majora, often with stitching to create a seal.

A small opening is left for the passage of urine and menstrual blood.

This procedure frequently requires defibulation, or surgical opening, before sexual intercourse or childbirth.

# FGM Type 4

## **Type IV: Other Harmful Procedures**

encompasses all other non-medical practices performed on female genitalia. These include pricking, piercing, or incising the clitoris or genital area, stretching the labia, or introducing corrosive substances to tighten or dry the vagina. It also includes cauterization, or burning, of genital tissue.

# A Global Issue

At least **230 million girls and women** alive today have undergone FGM in 31 countries across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

It's estimated that **4 million girls are at risk** of FGM each year.

FGM is also practiced in some diaspora communities in Europe, North America, and Australia.

# Who is Affected?

**Girls under the age of 15** are the most vulnerable.

FGM is practiced across cultural, religious, and socioeconomic groups.

Survivors often face long-term physical, psychological, and social consequences.



# The Roots of FGM

**FGM is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social norms.**

Common reasons include:

- Control over women's sexuality.
- A rite of passage into womanhood.
- Perceived religious obligations.
- Social pressure to conform.

These beliefs perpetuate gender inequality and harm.

# Ending FGM

**SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child marriage and FGM.**

Achievements:

- FGM prevalence among girls aged 15-19 has dropped in some high-prevalence countries.
- Increased global advocacy, legal reforms, and community engagement.
- Grassroots movements led by survivors and activists.

Challenges:

- Population growth in practicing countries poses a risk of increasing cases.
- Persistent cultural and social norms.

# Sources

## **UN** **SDG 5 about Gender** **Equality and Women's** **Empowerment**

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## **WHO** **Female genital** **Mutilation**

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## **UNWOMEN** **FAQs on Female Genital** **Mutilation**

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