

THE TIME IS NOW:

END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION / CUTTING (FGM / C)

An Urgent Need for Global Response

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - 2025



According to official [UNICEF figures](#) (2024), Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) affects at least 230 million women and girls across the world. This increase of 15% compared to the previously available data (which estimated that FGM/C impacted 200 million girls) is a result of population growth in the communities that practice FGM/C as well as newly available data from countries that were not earlier included in the data. For the first time ever, UNICEF data includes specific estimates of **FGM/C prevalence across Asia (80 million), the Middle East (6 million), and countries where FGM/C is practiced by small communities or diaspora populations (1-2 million)**. While the overall figure is now a comprehensive global estimate, detailed data on the national prevalence of FGM/C is still available only for 31 countries worldwide.

This report updates data from the 2020 report, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Call for a Global Response](#), presenting detailed and comprehensive evidence of FGM/C taking place across the world, in numerous countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, and North America, amongst indigenous and/or diaspora communities. Indirect estimates, small-scale research surveys, and anecdotal evidence documenting the practice have been produced by survivors of FGM/C,¹ activists, and grassroots organizations who are courageously working to end FGM/C across the globe. With this evidence, they have provided support to affected women and girls and advocated with policymakers, courts, and local authorities to introduce and enforce legal and policy frameworks against FGM/C.

Since the last report was published in 2020, newly available evidence and data demonstrate that FGM/C is occurring in at least 3 additional countries:

- Azerbaijan, where research investigations in 2020 found that FGM/C is being practiced in a few villages by North Caucasian communities;
- Vietnam and Cambodia, where preliminary findings from ongoing research demonstrate that FGM/C is being practiced by the Cham community.

In other countries, new reports and data have been published in the last five years, strengthening evidence about the prevalence and practice of FGM/C in various countries, including **Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, and Colombia**.



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¹ Survivors of FGM/C references women and girls who have experienced FGM/C. For the purposes of this report, the phrase 'survivor of FGM/C', 'survivor', or 'women and girls who have undergone FGM/C' will be used to refer to these brave women and girls.



FGM/C is present in at least 94 countries, all of which need to be under the international spotlight

As this report will show, there are 31 countries where nationally representative data on FGM/C is available. In addition, there are at least 63 other countries where the practice of FGM/C has been documented either through indirect estimates (usually used in countries where FGM/C is mainly practiced by diaspora communities), small-scale studies, or anecdotal evidence and media reports. This report, while not aiming to be an exhaustive review of all data on FGM/C, clearly shows that FGM/C is a global practice that requires a global response. If we want to achieve the worldwide eradication of FGM/C by 2030, we must measure its prevalence in every country and accelerate global efforts to end this harmful practice.

Lack of global awareness results in a lack of global action and investments

Despite the strong and continuously developing evidence base on the global presence of FGM/C, levels of awareness amongst the public and government officials regarding the global nature of the practice of FGM/C remain low. Activists and groups working to end FGM/C face monumental challenges in their work, compounded in many cases by the lack of reliable data, insufficient support and funding from the international community, and the reluctance of national governments to take action on the issue, particularly in countries which are not traditionally known for practicing FGM/C. The growing backlash against women's and girls' rights, which has led to legal challenges to existing anti-FGM/C laws such as in Kenya and The Gambia, also threatens to reverse hard-fought progress and gains made through decades of efforts by survivors and grassroots activists.

It is widely acknowledged that efforts to end FGM/C are severely underresourced and require urgent investment. While the majority of the current funding is concentrated in a limited number of countries in the African region, the responses are still extremely under-resourced in these countries. Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America receive only a small share of the investment. In these regions, several governments do not yet acknowledge (and in some cases even openly deny) the presence of FGM/C in their countries, thus undermining and sometimes openly discrediting the work of local survivors and activists.

Only 59 countries have specific laws against FGM/C across the world

The lack of political will and awareness of the existence of FGM/C worldwide impacts the availability of protective measures for women and girls who are at risk. Of the 94 countries with available data on FGM/C, only 59 have specifically addressed FGM/C within their national legal framework. There has been progress since 2020, with [Sudan](#), [Indonesia](#), [Finland](#), [Poland](#), and the [United States](#) passing new federal laws against FGM/C, while other countries strengthened their laws (such as [France](#) requiring education or awareness-raising on FGM/C in schools), passed laws at the state level (such as [Galmudug state](#) in Somalia), or adopting new legislation at the regional level as seen in the European Union. Officially recognizing FGM/C as a violation (whether in a standalone anti-FGM/C law or through specific provisions in existing laws) is arguably the first step to implementing national interventions to eradicate it and protect women and girls.

Laws against FGM/C are most common in the African continent as well as countries where FGM/C is largely known to be practiced by diaspora communities, including in Europe and North America. Asia and the Middle East lag behind in enacting legal prohibitions against FGM/C. In 2024, Indonesia became the first Asian country to pass a law against FGM/C through Government Regulation No.28/2024, which prohibits female circumcisions for infants, toddlers, and preschool children (likely only covering children under the age of 5).

Ending FGM/C requires a global yet nuanced approach

The globalized nature of FGM/C requires not only a global response but a nuanced one tailored to meet the particular contours of FGM/C as it is practiced in different regions, countries, or communities. As this report demonstrates, better and growing data on the existence and prevalence of FGM/C, increased investment in efforts to end FGM/C, effective implementation of laws banning the practice of FGM/C, and tailored and comprehensive policies and services for survivors are needed in every country where the practice is now known to be present.

Through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), activists and countries have made strong public commitments to ending FGM/C throughout the world by 2030. To achieve this goal, political commitments must now be put into action fully by accelerating and globalizing efforts, collecting and circulating reliable data, and providing the proper funding needed to put effective laws, policies, and interventions in place to eradicate FGM/C once and for all.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To this aim, the key recommendations put forward in this report call on governments, the international community, and donors to:

- Strengthen the global political commitment and prioritization of FGM/C;
- Strengthen the evidence base through critical research;
- Increase resources to achieve the Global Goal (SDG 5.3);
- Enact and enforce comprehensive laws and national policies;
- Improve wellbeing via support and services for survivors.