



6 February 2015 – More than 130 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East alone, where [female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#) is most prevalent. That’s over 4 times the female population of the United Kingdom. If current trends continue, up to about 86 million additional girls worldwide will be subjected to the practice by 2030.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves all procedures 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.

Although primarily concentrated in Africa and the Middle East, FGM is a universal problem. Additionally, FGM continues to persist amongst immigrant populations living in Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

#EndFGM

Recognizing the importance of engaging health workers in the effort to end FGM, this year's [International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation](#) will be marked under the theme "Mobilization and Involvement of Health Personnel to Accelerate Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation".

Although the practice of FGM cannot be justified by medical reasons, in many countries it is executed more and more often by medical professionals, which also constitutes one of the greatest threats to the abandonment of the practice.

"Health systems and health professionals are essential to the wellbeing of societies. They provide credible, scientific and unbiased information that can help people protect themselves from violations of their rights", [says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) in his official message for the day.

"We must also ensure that parents do not seek to bypass health workers in finding alternative methods of subjecting their daughters to FGM."

According to a recent analysis of existing data, over 18% of all girls and women who have been subjected to FGM have had the procedure performed by a health-care provider and in some countries this rate is as high as 74%.

One generation

Though the deeply harmful practice has persisted for over a thousand years, evidence suggests that FGM can be ended in one generation. [UNFPA](#), jointly with UNICEF, leads the [largest global programme to accelerate the abandonment of FGM](#)

"Change is coming from within the communities. Breaking the silence and disproving the myths around FGM are the first steps along the way to eliminating it altogether", Ban Ki-moon concluded.