



More than 130 million girls and women alive today have been cut in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East alone, where [female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#) is most prevalent. That's the population of France and the United Kingdom combined.

Up to about 86 million additional girls worldwide will be subjected to the practice by 2030 if nothing is done to stop the current trend, and February 6th marks the [International Day against Female Genital Mutilation](#)

Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) 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.

“Female genital mutilation denies women and girls their dignity, endangers their health, and causes needless pain and suffering, with consequences that endure for a lifetime and can even

be fatal”, says UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his [message](#). “Sustainable development demands full human rights for all women and girls.”

The need to address female genital mutilation has been fully acknowledged on a global scale through its inclusion in [Sustainable Development Goal #5, Gender Equality](#), which commits the global community to ending the practice by 2030 in conjunction with tackling issues such as early child and forced marriage. The theme of this year is 2017: "Building a solid and interactive bridge between Africa and the world to accelerate ending FGM by 2030."

Although the practice of FGM cannot be justified for medical reasons, in many countries it is being carried out at an increasing rate by medical professionals. This constitutes one of the greatest threats to the abandonment of the practice.

Though the deeply harmful practice has persisted for over a thousand years, evidence suggests that FGM can be ended in one generation.

Key Facts:

- Globally, it is estimated that at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of FGM.
- If current trends continue, 15 million additional girls between ages 15 and 19 will be subjected to it by 2030.
- Girls 14 and younger represent 44 million of those who have been cut, with the highest prevalence of FGM among this age group in Gambia at 56%, Mauritania 54% and Indonesia where around half of girls aged 11 and younger have undergone the practice.
- Countries with the highest prevalence among girls and women aged 15 to 49 are Somalia 98%, Guinea 97% and Djibouti 93%.
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.
- FGM causes severe bleeding and health issues including cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

Additional links:

- UNFPA / UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C: <http://www.unfpa.org/joint-programme-against-female-genital-mutilation-cutting>