

# Female Genital Mutilation



**Is Non-Islamic, against the teachings of Islam and brings Islam into disrepute**



**Is putting the health of our daughters, sisters, mothers and wives at great risk**



**Is illegal in the UK and carries a prison sentence of up to 14 years**

# Introduction – what is Female Genital Mutilation?

Female Genital Mutilation or FGM is a cultural practice that involves cutting, removing or altering the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons.

FGM is also sometimes known as female circumcision. Other local terms are:

- Tahoor
- Khitan
- Gudnii
- Absum
- Ibi
- Bondo
- Halalays
- Sunna
- Kutairi

It is estimated that over 24,000 girls under the age of 15 living in the UK are at risk of undergoing the most severe form of FGM at any one time.

FGM results in serious and sometimes life threatening health complications. These include:

- pain
- bleeding
- infections
- difficulties with childbirth

The health complications are both short and long-term. Some women live with these health complications for the rest of their lives.

Some people who practice FGM believe it to be an Islamic practice. This is NOT true. FGM is NOT a Muslim requirement.



# FGM is Non-Islamic, against the teachings of Islam and brings Islam into disrepute

The Islamic Shari'a Council, the Muslim College and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) have condemned the practice of FGM within the Muslim community.

FGM is not an Islamic requirement. There is no reference to it in the Holy Qu'ran that states girls must be circumcised. Nor is there any authentic reference to this in the Sunnah, the sayings or traditions of our Prophet (PBUH).

One of the basic principles of Islam comes from the Prophet (PBUH) when he said: "Do not harm yourself or others."

Most Muslims and Muslim countries around the world do not practice FGM. The practice of FGM predates Islam.

FGM is bringing the religion of Islam into disrepute.

"In Islam it is forbidden to mutilate the body, in this sense Female Genital Mutilation is condemnable as it irreversibly harms the woman. It is also prohibited to compel an individual to undertake this operation."

**Imam Abu Sayeed**  
**Chairman of the Islamic Shari'a Council**



# FGM is putting the health of our daughters, sisters, mothers and wives at great risk

FGM can result in excessive bleeding during the procedure and can be fatal.

FGM is carried out by untrained women with no medical knowledge in unsanitised and unclean conditions.

Those who undergo FGM will often suffer severe pain and shock, bleeding, infection, urine retention and injury to adjacent tissue.

In the long-term women and girls who have undergone FGM can have problems during menstruation, complications in pregnancy and cysts and scarring.

FGM has been shown to cause problems with childbirth and can cause the death of the baby.

FGM can be emotionally very damaging. Some girls and women will go on to suffer emotional distress, sexual problems and post-traumatic stress.

“It is not helpful to define degrees within the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Nothing is acceptable, not even a symbolic scratch, since that would be the start of a slippery slope.”

**Mrs Unaiza Malik**  
**Assistant Treasurer, Muslim Council of Britain**  
**& President Muslim Women's Association**



## FGM is illegal in the UK and carries a prison sentence of up to 14 years

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal for FGM to be performed in the UK or anywhere in the world on UK citizens or permanent residents of any age.

If you carry out or help in carrying out FGM or if you arrange for someone to undergo FGM you face up to 14-years in prison. This means that parents or family members who help arrange FGM in any way are committing a crime.

It is also illegal to take a British national or a permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help anyone trying to do this.

There is now a powerful movement against the practice of FGM and anyone who helps to carry out FGM or arranges for someone to undergo FGM or helps to take a British national or British resident abroad to undergo FGM, runs an increasingly high risk of being prosecuted by the police.

FGM is not only illegal in the UK but it is illegal in a growing number of countries where this cultural practice has been prevalent, such as:

- Benin
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Kenya
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda

“FGM is prohibited by many international and regional human rights conventions that protect women and children from cruelty and violence as well as protecting them from harmful traditional practices.”

**Dr Yunes Teinaz**  
**Fellow, Royal Society for Public Health**  
**and FORWARD Trustee**

## More information and support

**To protect a girl from/or at risk of FGM you can contact:**

**Metropolitan Police Project Azure (FGM Project):**

0207 161 2888

**FORWARD:**

0208 960 4000

**NSPCC FGM Helpline (anonymous 24 hour service):**

0800 028 3550

**For a statement regarding the UK law when travelling  
abroad contact:**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office:**

020 7008 1500

**From overseas:**

+44 (0)20 7008 1500

**If it comes to your attention or you suspect that a girl  
has already undergone FGM, there is support available.**

**You can contact FORWARD on:**

0208 960 4000

[support@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:support@forwarduk.org.uk)

If this is an emergency and it is out of office hours,  
you should contact the police or your local social  
services immediately.

**Supported by:**



Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS



The Muslim Council of Britain

The logo for FORWARD features the word 'FORWARD' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter 'O' is replaced by a stylized symbol consisting of three horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a signal or a stylized 'E'.