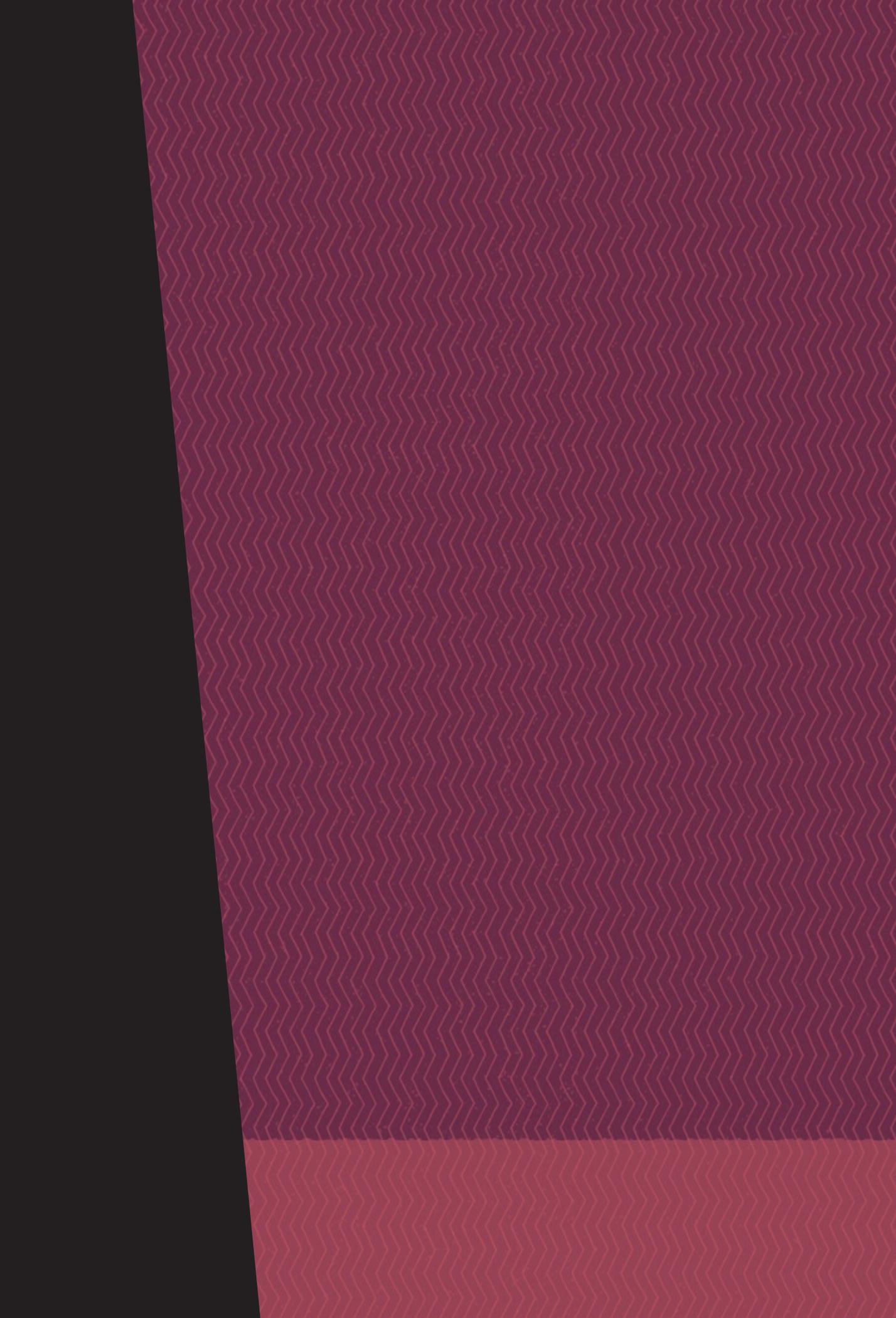


*Implementation of the  
International and Regional  
**Human Rights Framework**  
for the Elimination of  
**Female Genital Mutilation***





History tells us, and recent experience has shown, that laws alone cannot change social behaviour. The international community has adopted a more comprehensive and holistic strategy that incorporates human rights.

**A human rights-based approach to FGM** places the practice within a broader social justice agenda — one that emphasizes the responsibilities of governments to ensure realization of the full spectrum of women's and girls' human rights.



# Contents

<b>1.</b> Introduction .....	4
<b>2.</b> Facts on Female Genital Mutilation .....	12
<b>3.</b> International and Regional Human Rights Framework .....	18
<b>4.</b> International Human Rights Violated by FGM .....	24
<b>5.</b> Duties of States .....	32
<b>6.</b> Human Rights Monitoring Mechanisms .....	42
<b>7.</b> Implementation of the Human Rights Framework by Five States .....	54
<b>8.</b> Conclusions .....	70

**FIGURE 1**  
PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS AGED 15-19 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY FORM OF FGM

**FIGURE 2**  
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE ON FGM RECOMMENDATIONS MADE DURING THE FIRST CYCLE OF THE UPR

**TABLE 1**  
EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON TACKLING FGM MADE UNDER THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

**TABLE 2**  
EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSING FGM BY REPORTS OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS ON VARIOUS THEMATIC AREAS

**TABLE 3**  
RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELEVANT TO FGM IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

<b>ACRWC</b>	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
<b>CAT</b>	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
<b>CED</b>	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CERD</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
<b>CESCR</b>	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>CNLPE</b>	National Committee to Fight the Practice of Excision (Burkina Faso)
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female genital mutilation/cutting
<b>FIGO</b>	International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>ICN</b>	International Council of Nurses
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>MWIA</b>	The Medical Women's International Association
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECA</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction

BACKGROUND ON THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST FGM

AIM OF THIS PUBLICATION

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

TERMINOLOGY



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of partially or totally removing the external female genitalia or otherwise injuring the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is often believed to be a requirement for marriage and necessary to control women's sexuality. FGM is a reproductive health and human rights concern that has devastating short-term and long-term impacts on the lives of women and girls. The procedure is risky and life-threatening for the girl both during the procedure and throughout the course of her life. FGM is considered a harmful practice and a form of violence against women.

### 1.1 Background on the campaign against FGM

#### 1.1.1 FGM as a form of violence against women

Before the 1990s, the international community did not view violence against women in general and more specifically FGM as a major issue. If violence against women was recognized as an issue at all, it was seen as under the purview of national governments, not a subject of international law. Violence against women was widely viewed as a private act or a domestic matter carried out by private individuals. For this reason FGM was initially placed beyond the scope of international human rights law.

This changed in the 1990s with the global movement against violence against women. Landmark events were the adoption of General Recommendation No. 14 on female circumcision<sup>1</sup> (1990) and General Recommendation No. 19<sup>2</sup> on violence against women (1992) by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee explicitly included violence against women as a matter falling under the scope of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

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