

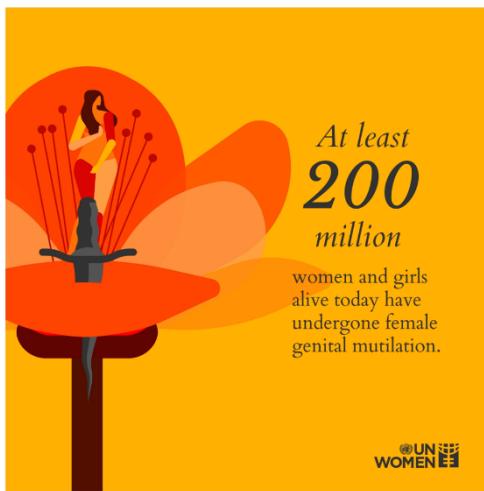


Day 15 -- 16 Days of Activism STOP Female genital mutilation

For well over a decade, Zonta International and Zonta clubs around the world have joined forces with the UN and other agencies to end the practice of female genital mutilation.

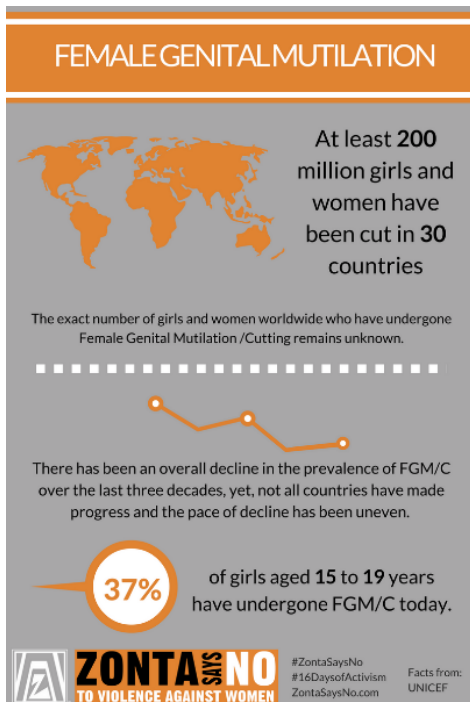
<https://www.siswp.org/news/209-day-12-16-days-of-activism-raise-awareness-and-stop-harmful-traditions-fgm.html?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=>

The UN states over 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation and 3 million every year are at risk. Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision, is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia. The practice is found in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and within communities from countries in which FGM is common. All forms of the practice are considered a fundamental violation of the rights of women and girls by the United Nations. The procedure can cause pain, shock, - bleeding, bacterial infection and longer-term problems including recurrent infections, lack of sexual pleasure, psychological trauma and childbirth problems. This practice is a form of gender based violence and must stop! UNICEF predicts that if there is no reduction in the practice between now and 2050, the number of girls mutilated each year will grow from 3.6 million in 2013 to 6.6 million in 2050.



What are we doing in the U.S.?

With the passage of the federal law ban, the Female Genital Mutilation Act in 1996, performing FGM on anyone under age 18 became a felony in the United States. However in 2018, the act was struck down as unconstitutional by US federal district judge Bernard A. Friedman in Michigan, who argued that the federal government did not have authority to enact legislation outside the "Interstate commerce" clause. As part of the ruling, Friedman also ordered that charges be dropped against 8 people who had mutilated the genitals of 9 girls. The Department of Justice decided not to appeal the ruling; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_mutilation_in_the_United_States - cite_note-:3-12 however, the US House of Representatives has appealed it. As of August 2019, 35 U.S. states have made specific laws that prohibit FGM, while the remaining 15 states had no specific laws against it. The US has also participated in several UN resolutions that advocate for the eradication of FGM, including the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



Despite the clear laws banning FGM, according to a study published in January 2016 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 513,000 women and girls in the U.S. have undergone or at risk of being subject to FGM. This is 3 times higher than the 1990 data. As with early efforts to eradicate domestic violence, there is a shroud of secrecy protecting FGM. People simply do not talk about the subject. Help break the shroud of silence.... **Educate people about FGM.**

SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.