

## INTACT Quarterly E-Newsletter January, February & March 2010

Dear INTACT Members,

In this issue of INTACT Quarterly E-Newsletter, we covered FGM information from the past 3 months. The month of February marked a very important date, which is the Zero Tolerance Day to FGM. In this occasion, many countries celebrated the day by hosting awareness events on the harmful tradition. We gathered a selection of interesting news articles that featured a number of celebrations in different countries, in addition to press statements. Not only that, we also included information on a new study on FGM in Kurdistan entitled "Female Genital Mutilation in Iraqi-Kurdistan", in addition to other valuable information that could be of help.

*((INTACT E-Newsletter is funded by Wallace Global Fund))*

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<<<<<The message below includes attached link>>>>>

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**Africa:** Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends Update 2010  
Feb 2010

The report is an update of PRB's 2008 wall chart on data and trends in female genital

mutilation/cutting. It shows that the practice is widespread in at least 28 developing countries, although there is some evidence that younger generations in some countries may face a slightly smaller risk.

FGM/C is practiced in at least 28 countries in Africa and a few others in Asia and the Middle East. It is practiced at all educational levels and in all social classes and occurs among many religious groups (Muslims, Christians, and animists), although no religion mandates it. Data for 28 African countries are displayed in PRB's new wall chart *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends – Update 2010*. The prevalence of FGM/C varies significantly from country to country, from nearly 98 percent in Somalia to less than 1 percent in Uganda. There is also wide variation by geographic region and rural or urban residence within many countries. In most countries, including Ethiopia, Liberia, and Kenya, the practice of FGM/C is more common in rural areas. But the reverse is true in some countries, including Nigeria.

To Download the Full Report:

<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2010/fgm2010.aspx>

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**Africa: Combating Female Genital Mutilation: Interview with the Honorable Amina Salum Ali, African Union Ambassador to the United States**

Feb 2010

As the African Union's first woman ambassador, Ambassador *Ali* is committed to promoting women's and children's rights. Her first introduction to FGM was as a member of parliament in Tanzania when a local organization presented a heart-wrenching video of FGM. The dismissive reaction of the other members of Parliament to the mutilations shocked Ambassador *Ali* and she challenged them, saying "this could be your daughter or my daughter." Since then, she has vowed to work for an end to this practice through laws and education. In this interview, *Ali* describes what the African Union has done to combat FGM, what is needed to eliminate the practice beyond legal instruments, the social context of the practice, and how she feels about the future for Africa's women.

For the Full Audio Interview:

<http://www.prb.org/Journalists/Webcasts/2010/alifgmc.aspx>

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**Austria: Female Genital Mutilation Remains Problem**

4 Feb 2010

**(Austrian Times)** - Between 6,000 and 8,000 women in Austria have been forced to undergo genital mutilation, according to Social Democratic MP *Petra Bayr*. She said the only way to change such thinking was to engage in awareness-raising and make it clear to parents that genital mutilation was neither called for by religion nor a precondition for finding a husband.

[http://www.austriantimes.at/news/General\\_News/2010-02-04/20323/Female\\_genital\\_mutilation\\_remains\\_problem,\\_group\\_warns](http://www.austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2010-02-04/20323/Female_genital_mutilation_remains_problem,_group_warns)

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### **Australia: Female Circumcision Happening in Australia**

6 Feb 2010

(ABC News) - Health authorities in Australia say they are concerned about the growing number of women who have undergone some form of genital mutilation. Female circumcision is illegal in Australia, but experts say there is evidence that it is being practiced here. More and more migrant women are also seeking help after having the procedure in their home countries.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/06/2812147.htm>

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### **England: FGM Factsheet**

15 Feb 2010

(Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board) - The Government Equalities Office (GEO) published a factsheet about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in partnership with the Department of Health and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). The factsheet aims to raise awareness about FGM and thus help prevent this illegal and cruel practice. It explains what FGM is, who is most likely to be affected by it and why some communities wrongly justify this practice. It also provides guidance on how to identify those at risk and where to find information, services and useful organizations.

<http://cumbrialscb.com/newsdetails.aspx?newsid=57>

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### **Europe: End FGM European Campaign**

5 Feb 2010

International Day of Zero Tolerance to female genital mutilation  
Amnesty International campaign calls on Europe to **END FGM**

(Amnesty EU) - In advance of International Day of Zero Tolerance to female genital mutilation (FGM) on 6 February, Amnesty International's END FGM European Campaign calls on European leaders to support its strategy to protect young girls and women affected by FGM.

Touring across five cities in Europe between February and March 2010, the END FGM European Campaign will launch a strategy with tangible recommendations for the EU Member States and the EU institutions.

Female genital mutilation is a form of violence against women and children and a violation of human rights affecting an estimated 500,000 women and girls in Europe and putting another 180,000 girls at risk each year.

<http://www.amnesty-eu.org/static/html/pressrelease.asp?cfid=12&id=440&cat=4>

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### **Gambia: Gambian Rights Group Advocates Alternative to Female Genital Mutilation**

10 Feb 2010

*(Afrique En Ligne)* - The Gambian Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP), in partnership with *Yolocamba Solidaridad* of Spain held a one-day conference on "Generating Alternatives to Female Genital Mutilation". Speaking at the conference, funded by the Region of Madrid in Spain, the Executive Director of GAMCOTRAP, Dr. *Isatou Touray*, said that the GAMCOTRAP/*Yolocamba Solidaridad* partnership was based on the need to stop the harmful traditional practices against women.

<http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/gambian-rights-group-advocates-alternative-to-female-genital-mutilation-2010021043890.html>

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### **Ghana: Schools Urged to Form Anti-FGM Clubs**

16 Feb 2010

**(Ghana Web)** - Mrs. *Florence Ali*, President of the Ghana Association for Women Welfare (GAWW) has called for the formation of anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) clubs in all schools at the *Sawla-Tuna-Kalba* district to help stop the practice. This was organized by the GAWW to mark the 7th Anniversary of Zero Tolerance to FGM under the theme: "The Role of Men and Boys in the Eradication of FGM". The event was sponsored by the UNICEF. It was aimed at equipping children with the requisite knowledge about FGM to enable them serve as peer educators in their communities and to stand firm against its practice.

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/artikel.php?ID=176786>

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### **Global: Lessons Learned from Interventions against FGM**

Feb 2010

INTACT hosted the first FGM Online Discussion Forum, entitled "Interventions to Accelerate the Abandonment of FGM: Lessons Learned" from February 8-20, 2010. The forum was meant to serve as a platform for dialogue and communication on FGM for researchers, activists, program specialists, NGO staff, and others who are involved in the quest against FGM. The FGM community membership base included 207 members from 42 countries around the world, where members from 15 countries actively participated and engaged in the discussion bringing viewpoints and perspectives from diverse backgrounds, contexts, and experiences. A fruitful list of lessons learned was derived from the interactive discussion. One of the most agreed upon points in the discussion was that effective abandonment of harmful practices requires collective discussion, collective decision, and collective commitment. In addition to that, a light was shed on the role of traditional media as a key in the social change process; therefore it should be used more often in interventions. Last but not least, the discussion illustrated the considerable complexity around research into FGM and evaluation of programmes. The relative lack of resources allocated to research and evaluation compared to resources for implementing FGM interventions, is partly to blame for this lack of clarity.

During the two weeks forum, the following five topics were discussed in an effort to glean lessons learned from previous and ongoing FGM interventions:

- Addressing FGM by linking with gender, human rights and culture.
- The evaluation and research methods used to assess interventions
- Discussing legislations against FGM
- Working with policy makers to move the agenda forward
- The social change approach used to address the issue of FGM

To join the community and access the published Lessons Learned, please click the following link:

<http://my.ibpinitiative.org/public/fgm>

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### **Global: International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting**

6 Feb 2010

*Statement by UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid and UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman on the occasion of FGM Zero Tolerance Day*

“Progress has been made in recent years in reducing the incidence of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), largely because communities and families are taking action and calling for change.

Success in reducing the incidence in several countries where it was once highly prevalent has occurred as a result of culturally sensitive engagement with local communities, encouraging change from within. Where communities have chosen to make public declarations against the practice, for example in Senegal, declines of up to 65 per cent have been recorded.

Support is being provided by UNFPA, UNICEF and other partners for community-led abandonment programmes. The programmes engage parliamentarians, media, traditional communicators, women lawyers, medical associations, religious leaders and scholars to speak out against the practice”.

*For the complete press Statement:*

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/news/pid/4830;jsessionid=B5E4567364495A1C3C60E88B43776BBA>

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### **Ireland: International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM - Thursday 4th February**

4 Feb 2010

(ifpa) - A Seminar was held in Dublin on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February to Mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM. The aim of the seminar was to mark, for the first time in Ireland, International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation and to provide a forum for discussion on work in Ireland and overseas to combat FGM. A new document entitled; "Ending Female Genital Mutilation: A Strategy for the European Union Institutions", as part of the END FGM European Campaign, was launched at the seminar.

<http://www.ifpa.ie/eng/Media-Info-Centre/News-Events/2010-News-Events/International-Day-of-Zero-Tolerance-to-FGM-Thursday-4th-February>

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## **Kurdistan: Female Genital Mutilation in Iraqi-Kurdistan Study**

6 Feb 2010

On the occasion of the International Action Day against Female Genital Mutilation, a representative empirical study on "Female Genital Mutilation in Iraqi-Kurdistan" was presented.

The study is a 40 page report that summarizes the results of a one-and-a-half year empirical study conducted by the German relief organization WADI. The numbers presented in the report are alarming: A vast majority of women in Iraqi-Kurdistan have undergone FGM with some regions reaching a top ratio of more than 80 percent. The study provides comprehensive evidence on the underlying dynamics of FGM and helps understand, why mothers who themselves experienced the horror of mutilation allow FGM to be practiced on their daughters. The report is cautious with recommendations, but a clear political task results from the findings: FGM is not marginal, but affects the life of the majority of Kurdistan's women and girls. It is up to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to take effective and immediate steps to protect them. Any sustainable policy against FGM must focus on higher social standards, better education and effective rights for women.

To download the full study:

[http://www.stopfgmkurdistan.org/html/english/fgm\\_study.htm](http://www.stopfgmkurdistan.org/html/english/fgm_study.htm)

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## **Mauritania: Mauritanian Muslim Imams Initiate Rare Ban on Female Circumcision**

21 Jan 2010

**(Reuters)** - Human rights campaigners who have been struggling for years to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) in West Africa got a boost this week as news emerged that a group of Muslim clerics and scholars in Mauritania had declared a fatwa, or religious decree, against the practice. About 72 percent of the women in Mauritania have undergone FGM which health workers say often causes severe bleeding, problems urinating and potential complications during childbirth.

[http://www.alertnet.org/db/an\\_art/58388/2010/00/21-170431-1.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/db/an_art/58388/2010/00/21-170431-1.htm)

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## **Somalia: The Gift**

9 Feb 2010

*The Gift* is a fictive monologue written by *Zahrah Awaleh* that deals with the realities and horrors of FGM. It gets inside the head of a young Somali woman who is on her way to her FGM reversal operation in a London hospital. In the monologue, she opens her heart to the listener and in the process restores and reclaims her dignity and self-worth.

<http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/news/news/571>

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## **Somalia: Desert Flowers Premieres and Stop FGM Campaign Events throughout Europe**

12 March 2010

**(Waris Dirie)-** When *Waris Dirie's* DESERT FLOWER appeared in 1998, the world was shocked. The former supermodel tells her breathtaking life story, describing her incredible journey from a nomadic life in the deserts of Somalia to the world's most famous catwalks. This was a dream and a nightmare at the same time. In New York, at the peak of her career, she tells in an interview of the practice of female genital mutilation that she had to suffer when she was five. *Waris Dirie* decides to end her life as a model and dedicate her life to fighting this archaic ritual.

The movie *Desert Flower* celebrated its premiere in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Madrid. *Waris Dirie* traveled to France, the Netherlands and Spain to present the movie, as well as the current campaign of the *Waris Dirie* Foundation Stop FGM NOW.

To Download the Movie:

<http://www.desertflower-movie.com/>

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### **UK: The FGM National Clinical Group (NCG) Conference 2010**

#### ***Safeguarding Women & Children - A Healthier Future without FGM***

After a very successful conference in 2008, FGM National Clinical Group are having a conference planned for 2010, the main theme of this conference will be around the issues of safeguarding women and children in the UK who are at risk of FGM. They will also launch an educational DVD, which clearly instructs and shows doctors, midwives and nurses how to undertake a reversal operation.

The conference will host both international and national speakers at the event include Professor *Dame Christine Beasley* Chief Nurse for England, Professor *Sir Sabaratnam Arul Kumaran*, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians, plus our two Patrons *Baroness Ruth Rendell* and Professor *Cathy Warwick* CBE general secretary of the Royal College of Midwives.

They are inviting submissions for a poster presentation on the subject of FGM. The theme is safeguarding. They would like to see any initiatives that are happening around the UK; these may include the care of women and children, raising the public's knowledge of FGM or preventing FGM in the UK. The posters will be judged by the member of the group and the winners announced at the end of the conference.

For more information on the Conference and for Registration:

[http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/conference\\_2010.htm](http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/conference_2010.htm)

[http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/poster\\_presentation.htm](http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/poster_presentation.htm)

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### **UK: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Launches FGM Awareness Campaign**

March 2010

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has launched an online resource to give guidance when incurring situations surrounding FGM. In addition, a poster and leaflet campaign have been conceived to provide key details, as well as challenges existing myths about the practice.

To Download the Leaflet:

[http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/files/fco\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/files/fco_leaflet.pdf)

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**UK: FGM Resource DVD**

March 2010

The FGM National Clinical Group is developing an educational DVD for health professionals. The DVD explains the procedure for undertaking a reversal operation.

To order your copy of the FGM Resource DVD:

<http://www.fgmnationalgroup.org/dvd.htm>

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*\*\*\*Thank you for Reading\*\*\**

**INTACT Network**

The International Network to Analyze, Communicate and Transform the Campaign against FGC/FGM/FC (INTACT), which is managed by the Population Council, is an international group of researchers, scholars and activists committed to bringing scientific evidence to contribute to the abandonment of FGM/C through:

- **A**dvancing social, behavioral and epidemiological research;
- **P**romoting research on the impact of interventions
- **F**acilitating the utilization of findings to guide policies and programs.

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