



## INTACT Quarterly E-Newsletter January, February & March 2011

*Dear INTACT Members,*

Welcome to the new issue of INTACT newsletter for!

In this issue of INTACT Quarterly E-Newsletter, we have covered FGM information from the past 3 months to give you a glimpse of the most important happenings. We gathered a selection of news from six different countries and three different continents. Not only that, we also included a document from the United Kingdom that sets out a multi-agency response and strategies to encourage agencies to cooperate and work together on FGM and the abuses related to it.

Enjoy reading!

*(This Issue of INTACT E-Newsletter is funded by Population Council and UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM)*

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**Africa:** African traditional practices: Progress has been made, but not yet enough

February 2011

(Guardian) - "Zero tolerance," a phrase first used in the 1970s in the US, is "a form of policing that allows no crime... to be overlooked." It is a way of "applying the strict and uncompromising letter of the law." Today, the world will celebrate the eighth anniversary of the international day of zero tolerance to FGM (a harmful traditional practice which involves the partial or total removal of female genitalia, undergone by more than 100million girls and women worldwide).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/06/africa-zero-tolerance-traditions-analysis>

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**Canada:** Nigerian family struggles to protect daughters from painful African tradition

January 2011

(Vancouver Sun) - A Metro Vancouver mother is waging a legal battle to keep her three daughters in Canada to protect them from the controversial tradition of female genital circumcision in their native Nigeria.

The family has lost one legal skirmish but won a second, and is now preparing for a hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) to find out if the mother and daughters -- now aged eight, 14 and 16 -- can remain in Canada.

Their incredible journey is spelled out in documents, at the Federal Court of Canada, that tell a tale as inspirational as it is heartbreaking.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Nigerian+family+struggles+protect+daughters+from+painful+African+tradition/4079172/story.html>

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## **Egypt: Female Circumcision -- 90 Percent of Childbearing Women in Egypt?**

February 2011

(Huffington Post) - The good news is that female circumcision -- also known as female genital mutilation -- has decreased in a number of nations. The bad news is that the figures are still shocking after years of campaigns.

The [practice](#) of cutting into female organs is prevalent in a number of countries in Africa, the Middle East and south Asia as well as among migrant families in Europe and the United States. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is usually carried out between infancy and 15 years of age to keep women "pure," marriageable and unable to enjoy sex. Consequences include severe bleeding, childbirth complications, and of course pain.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evelyn-leopold/female-circumcision---90-p\\_b\\_822283.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evelyn-leopold/female-circumcision---90-p_b_822283.html)

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## **Europe: EU committed to eradicating FGM**

February 2011

(EU Business) - The European Union is committed to eradicating female genital mutilation, the bloc's foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said Sunday, calling the practice an "exceptionally brutal crime."

"This is an opportunity to remind the world that the European Union condemns this abhorrent practice that severely violates the human rights and dignity of hundreds of thousands women and girls," Ashton said in a joint statement with the EU's human rights commissioner Viviane Reding marking the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation.

With between 100 and 140 million women and girls having undergone FGM worldwide, the practice is now an issue for western nations because of immigration, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Currently a dozen European nations along with the United States, Canada and 19 African nations count among the countries with legislation against FGM.

<http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/rights-women-fgm.8i9/>

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**Global: Charity looks at ways to prevent female genital mutilation**

March 2011

(FIGO) - UK education charity Feed the Minds is reportedly looking at ways to prevent female genital mutilation (FGM) around the world.

It will be launching a research paper on International Women's Day, held on March 8th, to consider ways to tackle the problem, reports ekklesia.co.uk.

According to the charity, female genital mutilation is "a human rights violation that has shocking long-term health implications".

<http://www.figo.org/news/charity-looks-ways-prevent-female-genital-mutilation-003403>

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**Global: Female circumcision migrating to West: IOM**

February 2011

Female genital mutilation has established itself in Western countries in recent years because of growing migration flows, the head of an international migration agency said on Friday.

"With the growth in migration in recent years, the phenomenon has unfortunately reached Europe (and) the United States," said William Lacy Swing, head of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

In an event to mark the international day of "zero tolerance" to female genital mutilation, Swing highlighted European Parliament estimates of 500,000 circumcised women living in Europe.

<http://www.canada.com/health/Female+circumcision+migrating+West/4226066/story.html>

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**Global: Female genital mutilation is about "controlling women's sexuality"**

March 2011

(FIGO) - Female genital mutilation (FGM) focuses on "controlling women's sexuality", according to a campaigner against the practice.

Midwife Comfort Momoh, who founded a specialist unit at London's Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital Trust, UK, to help victims of the practice, told TrustLaw she believes the problem is that supporters "argue it's a rite of passage".

<http://www.figo.org/news/female-genital-mutilation-about-controlling-womens-sexuality-003414>

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**Global: FIGO/SafeHands' FGM film wins major film festival award**

February 2011

(FIGO) - 'The Cutting Tradition' - FIGO's collaboration with [SafeHands for Mothers](#), narrated by Meryl Streep - has been awarded 'Best Documentary' at the Victoria Independent Film Festival, Australia 2010.

There is a special free screening on Saturday 5 February at 3pm at the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn, in London. For full details, [click here](#).

*'This film is likely to create greater awareness in solving this problem'* - FIGO's Chief Executive Hamid Rushwan.

*'This is an incredible piece of work. So moving, upsetting, confusing, terrifying and, in tiny parts, uplifting'* - Susie Orbach, psychotherapist, psychoanalyst, social critic and writer.

<http://www.figo.org/news/figosafehands-fgm-film-wins-major-film-festival-award-003271>

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**Global: The Effectiveness of Public Declarations**

February 2011

In observance of Zero Tolerance Day, The Population Council's INTACT network held an online discussion forum "Public declarations: How effective are they in mobilizing communities against FGM/C?" on February 14-21, 2011. This global online forum was an opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and lessons learned with other colleagues who are experienced in the field of FGM, in order to inform policies and programs aimed at ending the practice of FGM/C .

To view the full discussion [click here](#).

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**Global: Top UN officials call for abolishing female genital mutilation**  
February 2011

Stressing that all girls deserve to grow up free from harmful practices that endanger their well-being, United Nations officials on Sunday called for abolishing the practice of female genital mutilation to help millions lead healthier lives.

Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) is the partial or total removal of the external genitalia – undertaken for cultural or other non-medical reasons – often causing severe pain and sometimes resulting in prolonged bleeding, infection, infertility and even death.

Genital cutting can produce complications during child birth, increasing the chances of death or disability for both mother and child.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37478&Cr=women&Cr1=health>

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**Somalia: Intensive efforts reap progress towards ending female genital mutilation in Somalia**  
March 2011

“It is a shame and a disgrace if a girl is uncut. She will be outcast and ostracized from her community”. This is what Ubah Abdillahi believed until she was convinced otherwise by the community education programme aiming to end the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Somalia.

Ubah Abdillahi, mother of 5 girls and 3 boys, lives in Daami village in Hargeisa. She came to know about a programme run by NGO TOSTAN- supported by UNICEF- aiming to create community awareness around various issues including FGM/C, child rights, hygiene and sanitation, environment and health among others. She started to attend classes offered by the programme and participated in its activities.

[http://www.unicef.org/somalia/reallives\\_7723.html](http://www.unicef.org/somalia/reallives_7723.html)

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## **Tanzania: Maasai join anti-FGM campaign**

March 2011

(The Citizen) - Circumcision and excision are two ancient traditions which have been practiced globally for centuries. In Tanzania, the later is on the verge of eradication despite the presence of a few tribes that still cherish it. According to medical practitioners, circumcision has proved to be the safest prevention to health hazards in regards to sexual transmitted diseases.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the applied name of the excision that has been common in the central and northern regions. Due to its harm to the victims, the practice has encountered wide protests worldwide. Activists, humanitarian groups and non-governmental organizations worldwide are now at war to eradicate it. Despite efforts to put to light the disastrous effects of the tradition, there are few tribes that refuse to let the FGM die.

Medical officers say wounds inflicted after excision never get healed completely, for when the girl delivers the wounds open afresh and hence making her bleed profusely. According to tribal communities engaged in the practice, excision is believed to reduces sexual desire.

<http://thecitizen.co.tz/news/-/8836-maasai-join-anti-fgm-campaign>

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## **The Netherlands: New Dutch campaign against female circumcision**

March 2011

(Radio Netherlands Worldwide) - A Declaration against Female Circumcision is the latest weapon to help migrant parents prevent their daughters from undergoing the procedure. With the document in hand they can show their relatives in their home countries that the female circumcision, also known as female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the Netherlands.

The Dutch health service (GGD) believes there are around 25,000 girls in the Netherlands at risk of FGM. The procedure is unnecessary, extremely painful and dangerous, say the health authorities. The trick is to bring the subject out into the open. Parents should be made to feel able to discuss why they want their daughters circumcised, says paediatrician Dr Feuth.

<http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/new-dutch-campaign-against-female-circumcision>

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**UK: Female genital mutilation: multi-agency practice guidelines**  
2011

This document seeks to provide advice and support to frontline professionals who have responsibilities to safeguard children and protect adults from the abuses associated with female genital mutilation (FGM). As it is unlikely that any single agency will be able to meet the multiple needs of someone affected by FGM, this document sets out a multi-agency response and strategies to encourage agencies to cooperate and work together.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_124588.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_124588.pdf)

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**USA: 'Desert Flower' A Must-See Film About a Must-Change Custom**  
March 2011

(Huffington Post) - Late last year, members of the Women's Voices for Change community were invited to an advance screening of the film *Desert Flower* (Yes, that's Dr. Pat in the LIFE Magazine photo below.) Based on the autobiographical novel of the same name, the film chronicles the story of Waris Dirie, a young Somali girl who made the amazing journey from the most harsh conditions as a desert nomad to unexpected success as a fashion model and activist. The film does not reveal the nature of the horror at the center of the story until the audience has become comfortable with this Cinderella tale. Otherwise, the film would be relegated to the docu-dramas of other unspeakable tragedies that befall women and children all over the globe.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patricia-yarberry-allen/desert-flower-a-mustsee-f\\_b\\_835762.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patricia-yarberry-allen/desert-flower-a-mustsee-f_b_835762.html)

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

**INTACT Network**

The International Network to Analyze, Communicate and Transform the Campaign against FGM/C (INTACT), is an international group of researchers, scholars, and activists committed to bringing scientific evidence to bear on the campaign to end FGM/C. INTACT serves as a forum for FGM/C debate and helps bridge gaps in knowledge and information relevant to FGM/C on the local and the international levels. INTACT helps communicate lessons learned, disseminate research, and promotes the utilization of research findings to assist in the campaign against FGM/C.

INTACT is managed by the Population Council.

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