

WMA COUNCIL RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BILL LIFTING THE BAN ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN GAMBIA

Adopted by the 226th WMA Council session, Seoul, Korea, April 2024

1. The WMA Council meeting in Seoul notes with dismay the bill currently before the Gambian Parliament to lift the ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) in force since 2015. On 18 March 2024, Gambian MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of the bill which has then been sent to a parliamentary committee for a final review before a final vote in around three months' time.
2. According to UNICEF, 76 per cent of women (15–49 years) and 51 per cent of girls (0–14 years) have experienced FGM[1]. Since FGM was banned in 2015, only two cases have been prosecuted and the first conviction for performing mutilation was not handed down until August 2023[2].
3. Although Gambia ratified the [Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa](#), drawn up by the African Union, which condemns and prohibits all forms of female genital mutilation as a violation of the fundamental rights of girls and women, it remains widely practiced across the Country.
4. The Council recalls the [WMA Statement on Female Genital Mutilation](#) condemning the practice of genital mutilation or cutting of women and girls, regardless of the level of mutilation, and opposing the participation of physicians in these practices.
5. Reiterating that all forms of FGM constitute a violation of the human rights of girls and women and that its practice can lead to permanent damage to health, including chronic pain, infections, difficulties during childbirth and even death during or after the mutilation, the WMA Council urges the Gambian authorities to:
 - Respect their international human rights obligations, in particular the [Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa](#), and therefore immediately withdraw the bill lifting the ban on female genital mutilation;
 - Instead, reinforce its legislation for the elimination of FGM with adequate funding and a comprehensive set of policies to empower women and girls to exercise their human rights.
6. The WMA Council calls on WMA constituent members and individual physicians to mobilize and advocate against the bill and for women's rights in Gambia.

[1] [UNICEF Gambia Annual Report 2022.pdf](#)

[2] [Amnesty International](#)