

# FGM AND RACISM

**Racism:** the prejudice or discrimination against an individual or group based on the belief that racial categories exist and determine traits and characteristics of those who belong to a certain race.

## RACISM HAPPENS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS



### Interpersonal

It is the racial prejudice that appears between individuals. A person holds a negative bias towards a certain race and this bias impacts the way they treat the people they assume belong to that race. This can take many forms, from ignorant remarks to violence.



### Institutional

When laws, policies, and state practices are discriminatory, meaning that they disadvantage certain groups based on race or give an advantage to a race (usually white people). This is heightened by a lack of representation of marginalised individuals among decision-makers.



### Systemic/Structural

This is the racism that is infused in all aspects of life. The accumulation of many factors: racism in the history and culture, racist prejudice in society, racist discourse in the media...etc; create a systematic disadvantage for people belonging to marginalised groups in every aspect of their existence (housing, studies, work, healthcare...etc).

## HOW DOES RACISM AFFECT ACCESS? A PERSPECTIVE FROM



Every day ethnic and religious minorities face racist crimes across the EU. They are not targeted randomly by perpetrators, but simply because of whom they are or perceived as. **Structural racism** is a key contributing factor that drives **social inequities**. These social inequities prevent minorities from having adequate **access to public services**.

Racial discrimination is recognized as a key **social determinant of health** and driver of **racial/ethnic health inequities**. Studies have shown that people exposed to racism have poorer health outcomes (particularly for mental health), alongside both **reduced access to health care** and **poorer patient experiences**. EU institutions and Member States must ensure **protection from discrimination for women at the intersection with other grounds**, including racial, ethnic and religious minority women, but also women who are undocumented including access to health services and resources especially **Survivors of FGM**.

FGM Survivors can face multiple disadvantages of structural nature that lead to **multiple layers of vulnerabilities** when it comes to access to important information and resources. The **Covid19** pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in our societies making FGM Survivors even more vulnerable.

Therefore, **efforts to improve access** to health, resources and information should be based on a comprehensive **understanding of structural racism and discrimination**.

## WHAT ACTIVISTS AFFECTED BY RACISM HAVE TO SAY

End FGM EU is on a path to learn more about the intersections between Racism and our work to end FGM for all. The first step, we believe, is to listen to the people we work with who are directly concerned by these dynamics.

“No form of oppression occurs in a vacuum. Female Genital Mutilation affects people from various ethnicities living in Europe. Racist discrimination is an additional barrier in their path to accessing the appropriate support and care.”

TOKS OKENIYI  
END FGM EU CO-PRESIDENT

“Ignorance and poverty are at the core of racism. To end racism in FGM, financial resources and information are essential to increase the well-being of all FGM survivors.”

WEDAD ALMIZORI  
END FGM EU AMBASSADOR

“Being anti-FGM implies being against patriarchy AND anti-racist. To fight FGM, we must not only fight patriarchy, but we must also fight a racist structure that sometimes prevents FGM Survivors from getting the help they need.”

ISMA BENBOULERBAH  
END FGM EU COORDINATOR OF PROGRAMMES

“FGM is recognised as a harmful practice. What saddens me is how sometimes it is discussed in a problematic way, using inappropriate words and images. These words are harmful, humiliating and stigmatising. It enhances social barriers and violence for Survivors!”

IDIL HASSAN  
END FGM EU AMBASSADOR

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The voice of the anti-racist movement in Europe



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