

JOINT STATEMENT WITH 'AKIDWA'

FGM CONVICTION IN IRELAND

29th November, 2019

In Ireland, a court jury has found a married couple guilty of carrying out Female Genital Mutilation on their one-year old daughter. This is a ground-breaking judicial decision for the Ireland and for ending Female Genital Mutilation in Europe.

A jury has found a married couple guilty of the female genital mutilation (FGM) of their daughter. The man (37) and woman (27) pleaded not guilty at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court to one count of carrying out an act of FGM on a then one-year-old girl at an address in Dublin on September 16th, 2016.

According to **Fiona Coyle**, Director of the End FGM European Network:

"This court decision is significant as it shows once more that FGM is happening in Europe. However, the law alone will not end FGM. To truly protect girls and women at risk we need a holistic prevention focused approach. Within this the engagement of key communities is crucial. Social norms and traditions that fuel FGM can only be effectively tackled with support from communities themselves. We hope that this case will raise awareness of FGM and galvanise the necessary focus and resources to end it".

For AkiDwa, a member of the End FGM European Network and an organisation which has been working on the issue of FGM in Ireland since 2001, this court decision is a step in the right direction:

"The conviction by an Irish court yesterday has sent a very strong message to anyone who might be planning to subject their daughter(s) to FGM in Ireland. This conviction has set a precedent that Ireland does not condone the practice of FGM. AkiDwa's advocacy efforts over the last two decades have mainly focused on prevention and eliminating FGM globally. The hidden nature and the fact that it involves women and girls private body parts make it very hard to detect and control. AkiDwa has and will continue to advocate and engaged with affected communities as well as raise awareness at all levels of the society."

The founder of AkiDwa, **Salome Mbugua**, said:

"Government led National Action Plan and inter agency working group is highly needed in Ireland to ensure effective coordination and monitoring". According to the current statistics on prevalence of FGM Ireland, there are almost 6,000 women subjected to FGM, and according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) around 16,000 thousand girls in Ireland are at risk of FGM."

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What is FGM?

Over 600,0000 women living in the Europe have undergone the harmful practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and close to 180,000 young women are at risk from it every year.

Female Genital Mutilation comprises all procedures involving the removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. On average girls are subjected to FGM between birth and age 15. FGM is not prescribed by any religion and has no health benefits. On the contrary the practice can cause life-lasting physical and psychological trauma. 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM. At current rates, an additional estimated 68 million girls face being cut by 2030. FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. The practice also violates a person's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.

How to talk about or report on FGM?

FGM is a sensitive topic and needs to be reported as such. For more information on how to talk about FGM - [See here](#).

About the End FGM European Network?

The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) is a European umbrella organisation consisting of 27 national NGO experts on female genital mutilation (FGM), in 14 EU Member States.

<http://www.endfgm.eu> .

For further information please contact the End FGM European Network Communications Officer Ophélie Masson on omasson@endfgm.eu - Phone: +32 489 97 31 02

About AkiDwA

AkiDwA is a charity formally known as Akina Dada wa Africa (Swahili for sisterhood). Established in Dublin in 2001, AkiDwA has been representing migrant women in Ireland for almost two decades by providing policymakers with the unique perspective of a migrant-led national women's organisation. AkiDwA takes a holistic approach to integration that involves promoting both a migrant and a gender-specific approach to public services and by encouraging migrant women to access mainstream services and initiatives. We promote equality and justice for all migrant women in Ireland by ensuring equal opportunities and equal access to resources for all.