

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW
4th HUMAN RIGHTS FILM SERIES**

RESOURCE PAGE: *THE DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET*¹

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure common in many African cultures. It is usually performed on girls before they reach the age of puberty. It consists in the surgical removal of part of the clitoris, which leaves the young girl with little or no sexual feeling. Families approve the procedure in the hopes of making their daughters more likely to find a husband, as men typically prefer a circumcised wife. The belief is that the procedure terminates or at least reduces feelings of sexual arousal in women so that they will be much less likely to engage in pre-marital intercourse or adultery. Uncircumcised women in countries where FGM is normally performed have difficulty finding a marriage partner. Female circumcision is usually conducted in homes, villages or places of coming of age rituals. It is rarely conducted by health care providers and it is not done in sterile surroundings. Research has shown that many health problems result from the act, including urinary infections, infertility, pain during intercourse, and sometimes death from excess bleeding.

To learn more about FGM, you can visit the following websites:

The Female Genital Cutting Education and Networking Project: www.fgmnetwork.org

The purpose of the FGM Education and Networking Project is the dissemination on-line and offline of material related to female genital mutilation, otherwise known as female circumcision. The Project seeks to form an online clearinghouse and a community for researchers, activists, attorneys, and health care practitioners to obtain information and network with others involved in similar projects.

Amnesty International's Human Rights Information Pack:

<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/intcam/femgen/fgm1.htm>

This is the first of eleven units defining the operations, explaining Amnesty International's involvement with the issue, and providing lists of advocacy groups, reading material, and more.

Circumcision Information and Resources Pages (CIRP): Female Circumcision: www.cirp.org

Devoted to illuminating both male circumcision and FGM, the site provides a "Circumcision Reference Library" and "Circumcision Information Pages" addressing medical issues, legal and cultural questions, and reversal treatment options.

World Health Organization: www.who.int

This site provides a bibliographic database, fact sheets, "Female Genital Mutilation: An Overview," an information pack, an "Islamic Ruling on Male on Female Circumcision," a joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement, and more.

Association of African Women Scholars (AAWS): <http://www.iupui.edu/~aaws/>

AAWS, founded by Professor Obioma Nnaemeka, "is a worldwide organization dedicated to promoting and encouraging scholarship on African women in African Studies." It maintains a discussion list whose participants have focused on FGM and it sponsors major conferences at which FGM has been a topic.

Tahirih Justice Center: www.tahirih.org

The mission of the TJC is to enable women and girls who face gender-based violence to access justice. The Center engages in direct litigation, public policy advocacy, education and outreach to ensure systemic changes that protect women and girls from violence.

¹ Special thanks to Kokou Galli for writing this resource page.