

Press Statement: For Immediate Release

6/2/2015

The People for Change Foundation

## Female Genital Mutilation

Today, the 6th of February, is the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). In a statement to mark the occasion, The People for Change Foundation, a human rights think tank, called for more action to combat female genital mutilation and to ensure that victims of this harmful practice receive appropriate treatment.

FGM is internationally recognized as a procedure that violates the human rights of girls and women. The procedure, which is generally carried out on young girls, not only violates women's and children's rights but also their rights to health, security and physical and psychological integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment. FGM is a harmful traditional practice carried out in around 29 countries around the world, mainly in Africa and the Middle East.

Female Genital Mutilation is a procedure that involves the removal and modification of a woman's external genital organs for non-medical and non-health reasons. Whilst there are four types of FGM, none has any health benefits. The effect for the girls who have undergone FGM range from temporary or long-term severe pain to infection, an inability to enjoy sexual encounters, tetanus, hemorrhaging, problems with childbirth and an increased rate of neonatal death in later life, infertility and in some cases death through bleeding or infection.

Whilst many acknowledge that FGM is a painful procedure and has a long-term effect, it is generally practiced to preserve virginity and honor, prevent adultery and to make girls more marriageable, all of which are considered vital in Africa and North Africa.

Whilst in January 2014, FGM became a criminal offence in Malta, we must now move to develop awareness as well as robust educational and health guidelines to prevent and redress cases of FGM. There is no evidence that FGM is practiced in Malta; however, several cases of women with FGM have been reported, a fact that generally only becomes known if the woman is pregnant or is suffering from another condition that requires intimate medical attention. As a European country we are under an obligation to set up prevention and protection measures and legislation, as well as to raise awareness and develop and train professionals working with populations at risk of FGM to be able to adequately address the issue and mitigate the harmful effects of the practice.

Image 1: Logo of the People for Change Foundation



Image 2: Female Genital Mutilation

February 6<sup>th</sup> is

## International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

**WHAT IS FGM**

The cutting of girls' or women's genital organs not for health reasons, but to preserve virginity and faithfulness, prevent adultery and promote marriagability

**?**

Many believe FGM isn't harmful **BUT IT IS**

**PAIN** INCREASE IN NEONATAL DEATH  
**HAEMORRAGING**  
**RISK OF INFECTION** INFERTILITY **DEATH**  
PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE

**#FGM**

Every year in Africa **140 million women** are cut  
**3 million girls** are at risk of being cut

9000 women and girls who have had FGM seek asylum in Europe every year...  
...1000 seek asylum on the basis of FGM

### Let's stop #FGM

Speak up!

Break the taboo!

Ensure adequate health service access for those who have undergone FGM

