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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 7 July 2025

59/16. Elimination of female genital mutilation

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recalling the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the optional protocols thereto, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and all other relevant international human rights instruments,

Reaffirming that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, together with the optional protocols thereto, constitute an important contribution to the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 79/153 of 17 December 2024 on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation, and all other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women on measures to eliminate harmful practices that are detrimental to women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, as well as Human Rights Council resolutions 44/16 of 17 July 2020 and 50/16 of 8 July 2022 on the elimination of female genital mutilation, and other Council resolutions on the same topic,

Recalling also the adoption by the General Assembly of the Pact for the Future¹ and the Global Digital Compact annexed thereto, and other resolutions of the Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council on the topic of digital technology,

¹ General Assembly resolution 79/1.



Recalling further the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which reaffirms that all human rights, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

Recalling the commitment made by States to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Recalling also the annual commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, on 6 February, with the aim of strengthening awareness-raising campaigns and taking concrete action against female genital mutilation,

Recognizing that female genital mutilation constitutes a grave human rights violation and abuse and a form of extreme gender-based violence against women and girls that is inherently linked to deeply rooted harmful stereotypes, gender inequality and discriminatory social norms, perceptions and customs that jeopardize the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing also that female genital mutilation is a harmful practice constituting a serious threat to the right of women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including physical, mental, sexual and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, that it has no documented health benefits and may, on the contrary, give rise to possible adverse obstetric, prenatal and post-partum outcomes and may increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, tetanus, sepsis, urine retention and ulceration, as well as to fatal consequences for the mother and child,

Recognizing further that all harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, when perpetrated against girl children, have particular detrimental consequences for their health and growth, and recalling in that regard the need to guarantee all their human rights and fundamental freedoms and to protect them from all forms of violence and discrimination,

Recognizing that the practice of female genital mutilation continues to have an adverse effect not only on the economic, legal, health and social status of all women and girls but also on the development of society as a whole, while the empowerment of and investment in women and girls, the full enjoyment of their human rights and women's full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making are key to breaking the cycle of poverty and gender inequality, violence and discrimination against women and girls and are critical to, inter alia, sustainable development,

Recognizing also that harmful practices such as female genital mutilation are an impediment to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and to the respect for and protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and the development of their full potential as equal partners with men and boys, and convinced that discriminatory and stereotypical attitudes and behaviours undermine the status and equal treatment of women and girls and impede the implementation of legislative and normative frameworks that prohibit violence and discrimination against them and promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Deeply concerned that, despite increased national, regional and international efforts, the harmful practice of female genital mutilation, like many other harmful practices, persists in all parts of the world and that it is exacerbated in humanitarian situations, armed conflicts, pandemics and other crises, while noting with concern the emergence of evolving forms of the practice, such as medicalization and cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation,

Recognizing that the prevention and elimination of female genital mutilation is a national development, human rights and public health priority and therefore requires a comprehensive and multisectoral approach based on States' obligations under international human rights law and underpinned by the principles of, inter alia, accountability, participation, transparency, empowerment, sustainability, equality and non-discrimination, and international cooperation,

Recognizing also that the practice of female genital mutilation constitutes torture or ill-treatment and must be prohibited, in accordance with States' obligations under regional and international human rights laws,

Expressing deep concern at the lack of effective measures for prosecuting perpetrators and for providing victims and survivors of female genital mutilation with access to remedies and redress, healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health and psychosocial counselling, legal assistance and socioeconomic reintegration services,

Recognizing that new and emerging digital technologies are dramatically transforming the world and offer immense potential benefits for the well-being and advancement of people and societies and for improving gender equality and women's and girls' lives, including the elimination of female genital mutilation, while acknowledging that they pose new risks for humanity, some of which are not yet fully known, and the need to identify and mitigate risks and to ensure human oversight of technology in ways that advance sustainable development and the full enjoyment of the human rights of women and girls,

Noting with great concern that many developing countries lack meaningful and affordable access to information and communications technologies, as well as the persistence of a digital divide, affecting two thirds of people in the least developed countries, particularly women, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and people living in rural areas and in vulnerable situations who do not have access to the Internet, new and emerging digital technologies or the digital skills needed to meaningfully and securely use the Internet and the digital space, and stressing that strengthened international cooperation is needed to close the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, and address the pressing development needs and limited resources of developing countries with a high prevalence of female genital mutilation to close these divides,

Bearing in mind that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space are essential to close the gender digital divide, including by enabling the participation of women and girls in education and training and encouraging women's leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, while recognizing that increased reliance on virtual learning and the challenges faced by women and children, especially girls, in accessing the Internet and digital devices, digital literacy skills and other barriers related to the gender digital divide can limit access to equitable and quality education and increase inequalities between and within countries,

Gravely concerned that rapid technological change, including the development and use of artificial intelligence, can reproduce, reinforce and even exacerbate existing gender inequality and present serious risks to the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, as it can, without appropriate technical, regulatory, legal and ethical safeguards, affect the enjoyment of the right to privacy and exacerbate violence and discrimination, including through technology-facilitated harassment, abuse, sexual violence and discrimination against women and girls who resist having female genital mutilation performed on them and community leaders publicly speaking out against female genital mutilation,

Expressing concern that new and emerging digital technologies can facilitate the spread of disinformation and misinformation about female genital mutilation and its consequences, particularly on social media platforms, which can be designed and used to mislead and spread gender stereotyping and stigmatization in ways that are harmful to societies and negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, and emphasizing the important contribution of media, civil society and academia in countering this trend,

Recognizing that the free, full, active and meaningful participation of women, and girls as appropriate and in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, in the design, development and deployment of digital initiatives and content is a prerequisite for unlocking the potential, while minimizing the risks, of new and emerging digital technologies for the prevention and elimination of female genital mutilation,

Acknowledging the contributions of girls to their societies, highlighting the importance of the empowerment of all girls and the enjoyment of their human rights in accordance with human rights law, recognizing the opportunities to amplify these contributions through innovation and technological change, education in the digital age and access to digital technology and education, while emphasizing the need to ensure that all digital policies and programmes are responsive to the changing needs of girls and the changing digital landscape, and recognizing also in this regard the contributions of their families, communities and societies and the importance of implementing family-friendly and family-oriented policies towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all girls and their enjoyment of all their human rights in the context of innovation, technological change and education in the digital age,

Noting with concern that many countries lack accurate and reliable data on female genital mutilation to be able to identify women and girls at risk, track shifts in attitudes and practices, inform planning and track progress in eliminating female genital mutilation due to the absence of indicators in administrative data systems, the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress and the absence of standard guidelines on data collection, while noting the opportunities offered by digital technologies to generate these disaggregated data,

Welcoming the growing global consensus on the need to take appropriate measures to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, considering that this practice cannot be justified on any grounds, including religious or cultural grounds, and noting with concern the increased dissemination of misleading narratives in digital spaces, including through Internet campaigns and unregulated social media platforms, in ways that may undermine efforts to address harmful practices,

Welcoming also initiatives such as the Accountability Framework on the Elimination of Harmful Practices, adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union on 18 February 2025, which, inter alia, is aimed at supporting member States in strengthening nationally led accountability, monitoring and reporting on their commitments to end harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, in a manner consistent with national priorities and legal obligations, and across relevant political, governance, policy, programme and budgetary frameworks,

Reaffirming the obligation and commitments of States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and that States have the primary responsibility for preventing and eliminating female genital mutilation, and emphasizing in this regard the specific role of the different departments of government, the legislative branch and the judiciary at the national and subnational levels,

Recognizing that the responsibility to respect the rights of the child extends to private actors and businesses, including technology companies, which should pay particular attention to the accessible design and operation of the digital environment and the safeguarding of the safety, privacy and protection of children, including against harmful practices, including female genital mutilation,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation;²

2. *Urges* States to condemn and prohibit all forms of harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilation, including medical acts performed within or outside of medical institutions, and to take all measures necessary to prohibit female genital mutilation and to protect women and girls from this form of violence and to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls in accordance with the obligations of States under international human rights law, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health;

² A/HRC/56/29.

3. *Also urges* States to adopt and implement legislation, strategies and policies to ensure the protection, promotion and enjoyment of the rights and safety of girls in the digital environment;

4. *Further urges* States to ensure the protection of, and provision of support to, women and girls subjected to, or at risk of, female genital mutilation and to address the underlying systemic and structural causes in which this harmful practice is rooted by establishing well-defined, comprehensive, inclusive, gender- and age-sensitive multisectoral strategies and with a human rights-based approach, consistent with States' obligations under international human rights law, that include initiatives promoting access to and use of digital technologies to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, closing the gender digital divide and protecting from risks against the human rights, dignity and well-being of all women and girls in the digital space that are driven by political commitment, civil society engagement and accountability at the national, local and community levels;

5. *Urges* States to ensure that national action plans and strategies on the prevention and elimination of female genital mutilation are adequately resourced, include projected timelines for goals and incorporate digital solutions for the effective monitoring of targets and indicators with the participation of affected women and girls, women's organizations, youth groups, health workers, religious, traditional and community leaders, family members and other relevant stakeholders;

6. *Also urges* States to adopt laws and allocate sufficient resources to expedite the implementation of policies and programmes and legislative frameworks aimed at eliminating female genital mutilation and enabling the enjoyment by women and girls of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including but not limited to sexual and reproductive health, while incorporating the use of information and communications technologies to facilitate learning and knowledge-sharing;

7. *Further urges* States to promote legal and policy measures to close digital divides, including the gender digital divide, by ensuring equal access by all women and girls, including survivors and those at risk of female genital mutilation, to technologies that are affordable and accessible and to the Internet, as well as to digital literacy skills, and increasing the full, meaningful and equal participation and leadership of women in all stages of the process of conceptualizing, developing and implementing digital technologies and the development of local content and content relevant to local realities in the digital context;

8. *Calls upon* States to expand, explore and utilize technology-driven and technology-enabled interventions to support and complement existing comprehensive and multisectoral strategies to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, and girls as appropriate and in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, who have been or are at risk of being subjected to the practice, including by:

(a) Addressing the root causes of female genital mutilation, including gender inequality, gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours, the socioeconomic drivers of violence and unequal power relations in which women and girls are viewed as subordinate to men and boys, by developing and implementing, inter alia, awareness-raising programmes that delink the practice from religion, culture or traditions and provide accurate information about the negative impact of female genital mutilation on women and girls and society at large, including through traditional and non-traditional media, such as television and radio discussions, social media, the Internet and community communication and dissemination tools to systematically reach and engage the general public, in particular school teachers, families, communities, civil society representatives, including of women- and girl-led organizations, and religious and traditional leaders;

(b) Developing and implementing information and communications technology tools and digital content suitable for formal and informal education, in particular for children (especially girls) and youth and for parents, legal guardians and families, about the harmful effects of female genital mutilation and the role of men and boys as agents of change within communities by being more involved in information and awareness-raising campaigns, intergenerational dialogues and peer education and training programmes;

(c) Facilitating the creation of community technology centres, libraries, women's centres equipped with Internet access and devices and safe and accessible spaces where girls and women can acquire digital skills through access to digital learning opportunities and connect with peers, mentors, teachers and community leaders and express themselves and speak out against female genital mutilation without fear of reprisals;

(d) Developing, supporting and promoting educational digital programmes on human rights, gender equality, health and life skills and critical thinking to challenge misinformation and disinformation in the digital space as well as the negative stereotypes and harmful attitudes and practices that sustain female genital mutilation and perpetuate violence and discrimination against women and girls;

(e) Adopting and implementing sustained and inclusive child-empowering, age-appropriate, disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive non-formal and formal education programmes, providing children, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, teachers, health workers, social workers, law enforcement and judicial officials and other professionals working with and for children with skills relating to digital and data literacy and developing digital training materials to increase the knowledge and technical skills of professionals in providing gender- and age-sensitive services to all women and girls survivors or at risk of female genital mutilation;

(f) Mobilizing and raising the awareness of online and offline opinion makers, including politicians at the national and local levels, parliamentarians, religious, traditional and community leaders, civil society organizations, the media, journalists, community communicators, storytellers, bloggers and social media influencers about the harmful impact of female genital mutilation on the human rights and well-being of women and girls;

(g) Ensuring that universal health coverage integrates the prevention and treatment of the health risks and complications associated with female genital mutilation, including through digital innovations facilitating access to timely and accurate information on the provision of mental, sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health at the primary healthcare level for women and girls affected by or at risk of female genital mutilation, as well as equipping health systems with digital tools to track patients' health outcomes, speed up referrals and link patients to a continuum of interdisciplinary, accessible, sustained and coordinated psychosocial support services, legal counselling and appropriate remedies;

9. *Calls upon* States to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, and that of girls as appropriate and in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, in decision-making in processes related to information and communications technologies, including policies and appropriate safeguards to prevent and address any adverse impact arising from the use of new and emerging digital technologies on human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly on online safety, violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, by:

(a) Criminalizing and prosecuting online harassment against women and girls resisting female genital mutilation being performed on them and anti-female genital mutilation campaigners, including women who speak out against and defend the human rights of women and girls who are survivors or at risk of female genital mutilation, and promoting a safe and enabling environment to conduct their work, both online and offline, without fear or risk of harm;

(b) Developing, reviewing and implementing gender-sensitive policies that promote and protect the right to privacy of women and girls, including survivors and those at risk of female genital mutilation, in the context of digital communications and new and emerging digital technologies;

(c) Prohibiting arbitrary or unlawful surveillance and interference with the right to privacy of children, as well as racial profiling of women and girls and members of their families, when deploying digital surveillance technologies, such as facial recognition, including in the context of monitoring suspicious cross-border and transnational movement patterns related to female genital mutilation, by public and private actors;

(d) Adopting or reviewing legislation, regulations, policies and up-to-date guidance to ensure that business enterprises and technology companies fully incorporate the right to privacy and other relevant human rights into the design, development, deployment and evaluation of technologies, including artificial intelligence, adopting mechanisms to monitor digital and social media content by exercising due diligence and human oversight to prevent, mitigate and redress harmful and misleading content on female genital mutilation and providing women and girls who are survivors or at risk of female genital mutilation whose rights may have been violated or abused in the digital space with access to an effective remedy, including reparation and guarantees of non-repetition;

(e) Ensuring the availability of relevant training for judges, lawyers, prosecutors and other relevant practitioners in the justice system on the functioning of new and emerging digital technologies in preventing and eliminating female genital mutilation and their potential negative impact on the human rights of women and girls who are survivors or at risk of female genital mutilation;

(f) Countering, as appropriate, and in accordance with international human rights law, the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation aiming to promote, justify or misrepresent female genital mutilation and undermine the human rights and agency of women and girls by observing the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination and underlining the importance of free, independent, plural and diverse media and of providing and promoting access to independent, fact-based information to counter disinformation and misinformation;

10. Urges States to protect individuals against violations and abuses of their human rights in the digital space, including through human rights due diligence and establishing effective oversight and remedy mechanisms, and incorporate digital solutions for strengthened accountability systems in the context of comprehensive and multisectoral strategies, policies, plans and budgets to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, including by:

(a) Adopting national legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation, in accordance with international human rights law, and introducing digital technologies to facilitate and track its strict application, such as through the development of digital information management systems to enhance coordination among officials responsible for case reporting, investigations, prosecution and judicial adjudication and to strengthen transnational police and judicial cooperation in the exchange of information on victims and perpetrators of female genital mutilation, in accordance with national laws and policies and international human rights law;

(b) Introducing digital technologies to facilitate timely and effective remedies for women and girls at risk of or affected by female genital mutilation, such as through the development of accessible digital content to inform women and girls about their human rights and how to access legal assistance and remedies;

(c) Encouraging all relevant stakeholders to mainstream a gender- and age-sensitive perspective into the conceptualization, development and implementation of digital technologies and related policies and promote the participation of women and girls in order to address violence and discrimination against women and girls in digital contexts, inter alia, by encouraging digital technology companies, including Internet service providers, to respect standards and implement transparent and accessible reporting mechanisms;

(d) Ensuring that women survivors of female genital mutilation are not subject to criminal prosecution or administrative sanctions for failing to report cases or for being subjected to this harmful practice, while taking legal and policy measures to prevent their revictimization during investigations and judicial hearings as well as in the media and the digital space;

(e) Developing digital learning content to provide gender- and age-sensitive training for law enforcement officials and other relevant authorities, including on ensuring child-friendly justice, the best interests of the child and the right to privacy at all stages of proceedings;

(f) Establishing or strengthening digital mechanisms, including gender- and age-sensitive 24/7 mobile hotline services, to enable safe and confidential reporting of cases that are likely or have occurred and to speed up referrals to needed services and accurate information about female genital mutilation;

(g) Ensuring that national strategies and coordination mechanisms to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation can rely on efficient and transparent digital monitoring and oversight models to review policies, programmes, budgets and the quality of prevention and response services, and to track progress in protecting women and children from harmful practices;

(h) Developing the digital capacity of national human rights institutions to investigate human rights violations relating to the practice of female genital mutilation and to monitor progress in preventing and eliminating this harmful practice;

(i) Developing and strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to undergo data digitalization processes, including through the development of mobile-based surveys, digital reporting platforms and real-time dashboards, in order to systematize research and the collection of data on female genital mutilation disaggregated by, inter alia, age, geographical location and ethnic and migrant status, while ensuring ethical safeguards to protect the dignity and safety of those affected, including respect for the right to privacy, informed consent, transparency, accountability and data security in sharing data by relevant stakeholders and between countries;

(j) Promoting the free, active, informed and meaningful participation of civil society organizations and of women and girls at risk of or affected by female genital mutilation in social accountability mechanisms by making accessible in open digital sources and platforms relevant public information used to monitor policies, programmes, budgets and services designed to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, as well as the effective implementation of public declarations of abandonment;

11. *Also urges* States to ensure that children are informed, in a child-friendly, easily accessible and age-appropriate way, about the collection and use of their data online and to ensure that national legislation on data protection and privacy is in accordance with their international human rights obligations and allows law enforcement, social welfare and judicial authorities to conduct effective and appropriate investigations and prosecutions to combat violations and abuses of the rights of the child and to raise awareness of the importance of activities and compliance with the law by private actors, notably those in the digital industry, to strengthen those efforts;

12. *Calls upon* States to strengthen public-private partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector, in particular telecommunications and technology companies, to increase digital access for communities where female genital mutilation is prevalent and co-design digital solutions together with affected women and girls and encourage technology companies to support and fund these initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility;

13. *Calls upon* all States and development cooperation agencies to prioritize female genital mutilation as a globally relevant issue, to increase their development cooperation efforts – technical and financial assistance, technology transfers, research and South-South and triangular cooperation – for the effective integration of new and emerging digital technologies into global, regional, national and community efforts to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation and to fill the current estimated global funding gap of \$2.1 billion to end female genital mutilation by 2030 by increasing their financial support for the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Delivering the Global Promise to End Female Genital Mutilation by 2030 of the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund and for other initiatives at the local, regional and international levels;

14. *Decides* to convene a high-level panel discussion, fully accessible for persons with disabilities, during the high-level segment of its sixty-first session, on the role of new and emerging digital technologies in preventing and eliminating female genital mutilation,

inviting States, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, women and girls and other relevant stakeholders to share good practices and lessons learned for the continuous improvement of digital approaches to end female genital mutilation, including developing gender-sensitive digital technologies and implementing safeguards to protect the right to privacy and other human rights in the digital space of women and girls who are survivors or at risk of female genital mutilation, and invites the President of the Human Rights Council to propose that the above-mentioned panel discussion be the high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming to be held at the sixty-first session;

15. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a summary report on the panel discussion and to submit the report to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-fourth session;

16. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the question of female genital mutilation in accordance with its programme of work.

*32nd meeting
7 July 2025*

[Adopted without a vote.]
