

# Hadhawacin Gabadhada

*A WellShare International project to protect girls and women from female genital cutting*

## Key Facts

- *Female genital cutting (FGC), female genital mutilation (FGM), or female circumcision includes all actions that purposely change or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.*
- *The procedure has no health or other benefits for girls and women. In fact, FGC can cause severe health and emotional problems, as well as complications in childbirth including increased risk of newborn deaths.*
- *FGC is a violation of the human rights of girls and women that has criminal penalties in Minnesota.*
- *There are many myths and misconceptions related to why FGC happens. FGC is not a religious requirement in any religion.*



### WHO:

According to the World Health Organization, **more than 3 million girls and women are at risk each year** and more than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut in 30 countries where FGC is most common.

### WHAT:

Female genital cutting (FGC) includes all actions that involve partial or total removal of healthy external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs that is not medically necessary.

- There are 4 major types of FGC. Type 1 is the partial or complete removal of the clitoris. Type 2 is the partial or total removal of the inner labia (sometimes includes clitoral removal). Type 3 is the removal of the inner and/or outer labia (sometimes include clitoral removal). The fourth type of FGC includes all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes such as pricking, piercing, burning and incising the genital area.

### WHERE:

**FGC is a global concern and issue.**

The prevalence of FGC in the United States is not fully known.

- The practice is most common in western, eastern, and north-eastern African regions as well as some countries in Asia and the Middle East, and in communities originating from those locations, now residing elsewhere.

### WHEN:

FGC is most commonly practiced on girls between the ages of four and 12.

- FGC is performed as early as a few days after a girl's birth or as late as days prior to an adult woman's marriage or after the first pregnancy.

# Hadhawacin Gabadhada

*A WellShare International project to protect girls and women from female genital cutting*

## WHY:

Different communities have different reasons for performing FGC. **There are many myths and misconceptions related to why FGC happens.**

- FGC is a cultural or social practice. FGC is not a religious requirement or practice, though it is done by people across many religions.
- Some reasons for performing FGC include:
  - FGC is a long-standing cultural tradition with complicated and intergenerational roots.
  - FGC is practiced as a coming-of-age ritual, marking a transition that readies the girl for adulthood and marriage.
  - FGC can be a social norm and can be driven by a fear of community rejection.
  - FGC is thought to control or reduce a women's sexuality. The practice may aim to ensure virginity before marriage and loyalty after marriage.
  - FGC is sometimes associated with cultural ideas of being feminine or modest, and the belief that the outer, removed body parts are unclean or unfeminine.
  - FGC practitioners sometimes falsely believe there is religious support for the practice.

## What Now

**It is time to commit to protecting girls and women.**

- It's a movement
  - *Since the late 1990s, people and communities around the world have worked tirelessly against the practice of FGC – including communities in Minnesota.*
- There is hope
  - *Research has shown that if communities that traditionally practice FGC decide to stop it themselves, the practice can be eliminated very quickly.*
- You can make a difference
  - *Join in and commit to protect girls and women (daughters, granddaughters, and all other female family members and friends) from FGC of FGC.*

Content References: <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>; WellShare International (formerly Minnesota International Health Volunteers) (2009). *Providing Culturally Appropriate Reproductive Health and Family Planning Services to Somali Immigrants and Refugees: A Reference Guide*; <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/ss/ssfgm.pdf>; [https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/pub\\_bp\\_fgmlawsusa.pdf](https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/pub_bp_fgmlawsusa.pdf)

Photo Citation: <https://stepcdn.com/assets/2017-11/17/0/wj759/hijab-1-700x-700x.png>