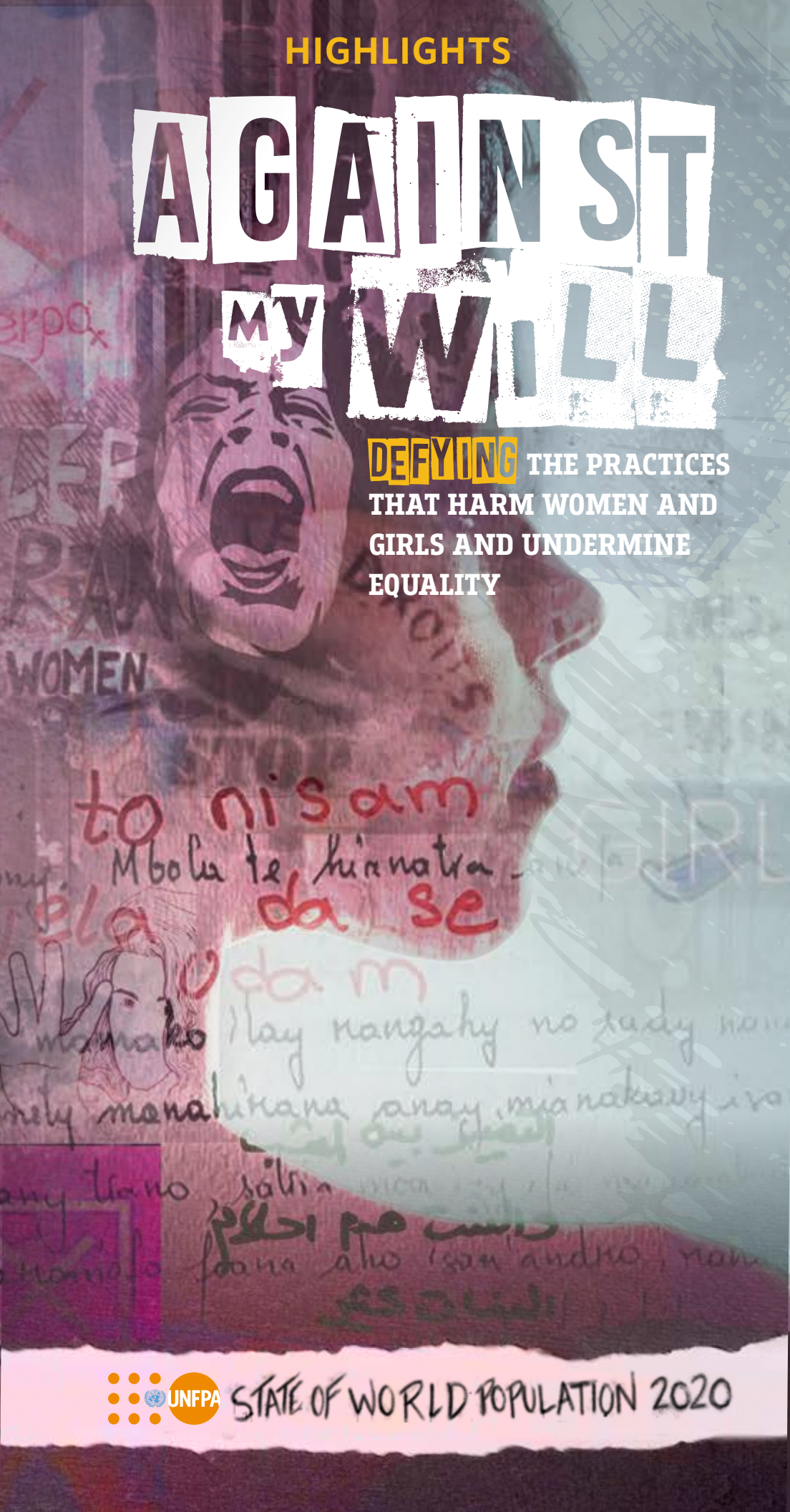


HIGHLIGHTS

# AGAINST MY WILL

**DEFYING** THE PRACTICES  
THAT HARM WOMEN AND  
GIRLS AND UNDERMINE  
EQUALITY



STATE OF WORLD POPULATION 2020





**She's a commodity to be traded.**

**She's an object of desire.**

**She's a burden to discard.**

**She's a source of free labour.**

**SHE'S a GIRL.**

**This is the dismal reality:**

**Her body, her life and her future are not her own.**

**BUT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.**



# Harmful practices

**Every day**, hundreds of thousands of **GIRLS** around the world are harmed physically or psychologically, or both, with the full knowledge and consent of their families, friends and communities. The impact ripples throughout society, reinforcing gender stereotypes and inequalities.

The scope of harmful practices is vast, but three in particular have been almost universally denounced as human rights violations yet remain stubbornly widespread: female genital mutilation, child marriage and son preference.

These practices cross borders and cultures. They vary in the specifics of their execution—a girl may have her genitals cut in infancy or adolescence, she may be married off to “protect” her from rape or as part of a trade, she may be erased before birth or neglected to death after. But these practices are alike in origin; they are rooted in gender inequality and a desire to control female sexuality and reproduction. Though they inflict a devastating array of harms on individual women and girls, the harms inflicted on the world at large, and on future generations, may be greater still. As the health, education and human potential of women and girls are diminished, so too is humanity.

But we have the power to defy the forces that perpetuate harm and to realize a world where every woman and girl is free to chart her own future.

# FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

**Cut, SCRAPED, SEITCHED**

Female genital mutilation, FGM, is the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

**It takes place in every region of the world, affecting 200 million women and girls alive today.**

It violates women's and girls' rights to health, to bodily integrity, to be free from discrimination and cruel or degrading treatment. It can even kill her.

Yet it persists, grounded in the misguided belief that it improves fertility, enhances sexual pleasure for men, suppresses female sexuality, complies with religious demands or results in acceptance by the community. It is performed to uphold a girl's purity, honour and cleanliness, to make her more marriageable.





# CHILD MARRIAGE

**PROMISED, GIVEN, TRADED, SOLD**

When a girl is married, her schooling usually ends. Childbearing begins. She is made more vulnerable to pregnancy-related death, and to domestic violence. Doors to the future slam shut.

Child marriages are almost universally banned, yet they happen 33,000 times a day, every day, all around the world.

**An estimated 650 million girls and women alive today were married as children.**

Parents justify marrying girls early as a way to secure their economic futures, or they may regard daughters as an economic commodity and a way of settling familial debts or disputes. Some parents believe early marriage will safeguard their daughters from sexual violence, allocating responsibility for their daughter's safety to her husband and his family. The fact that her husband may be a source of sexual violence is seldom considered. Families increasingly resort to child marriage in times of crisis and displacement.

But the basis of this tradition is usually the desire to preserve a girl's virginity for her husband, regarding her body as an object for his possession and use.

She

# SON PREFERENCE

**UNWANTED, NEGLECTED, ERASED**

When boys are more highly valued than girls, pressure to have a son can be intense. Couples may go to great lengths to avoid giving birth to a girl (gender-biased sex selection), or they may fail to care for the health and well-being of a daughter they already have in favour of their son (postnatal sex selection).

Son preference is not new, but the trend towards smaller families is. Most women today have three children or fewer; fewer children means fewer chances to have a son. About a quarter of all parents with two girls may resort to gender-biased sex selection to avoid the birth of a third girl.

**Today, it is estimated that more than 140 million females are missing as a consequence of son preference.**

The practice can result in coerced or forced abortions for pregnant women; abandonment or exclusion of women who give birth to girls; and poorer nutrition, inadequate education and fewer inoculations for girls.

In some countries, rampant son preference has distorted the sex-ratio balance of entire populations, leaving men without partners and exacerbating gender-based violence.

预览已结束

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