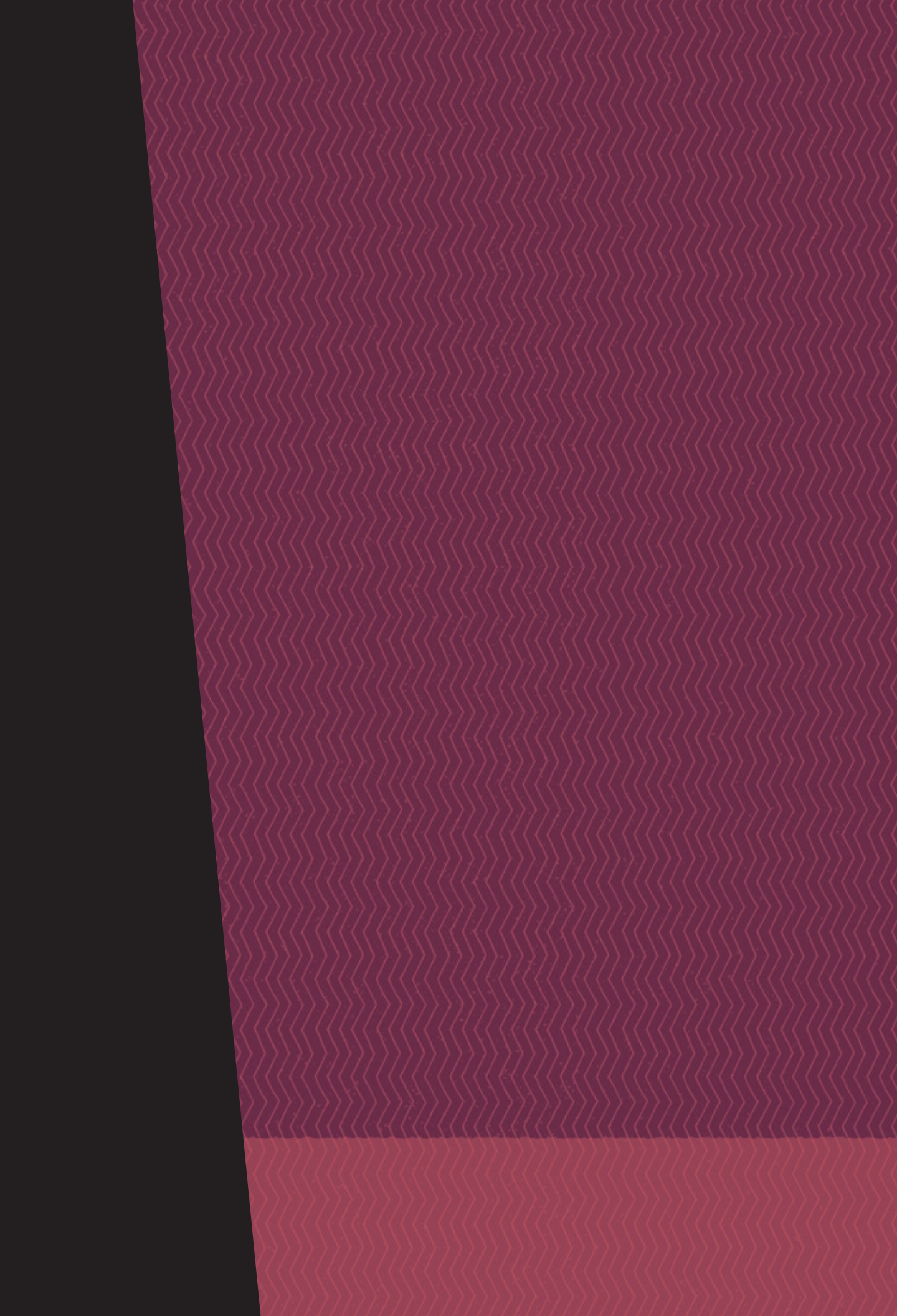


*Implementation of the
International and Regional
Human Rights Framework
for the Elimination of
Female Genital Mutilation*





History tells us, and recent experience has shown, that laws alone cannot change social behaviour. The international community has adopted a more comprehensive and holistic strategy that incorporates human rights.

A human rights-based approach to FGM places the practice within a broader social justice agenda — one that emphasizes the responsibilities of governments to ensure realization of the full spectrum of women's and girls' human rights.



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ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
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CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CNLPE	National Committee to Fight the Practice of Excision (Burkina Faso)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
FIGO	International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MWIA	The Medical Women's International Association
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

BACKGROUND ON THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST FGM

AIM OF THIS PUBLICATION

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

TERMINOLOGY



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of partially or totally removing the external female genitalia or otherwise injuring the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is often believed to be a requirement for marriage and necessary to control women's sexuality. FGM is a reproductive health and human rights concern that has devastating short-term and long-term impacts on the lives of women and girls. The procedure is risky and life-threatening for the girl both during the procedure and throughout the course of her life. FGM is considered a harmful practice and a form of violence against women.

1.1 Background on the campaign against FGM

1.1.1 FGM as a form of violence against women

Before the 1990s, the international community did not view violence against women in general and more specifically FGM as a major issue. If violence against women was recognized as an issue at all, it was seen as under the purview of national governments, not a subject of international law. Violence against women was widely viewed as a private act or a domestic matter carried out by private individuals. For this reason FGM was initially placed beyond the scope of international human rights law.

This changed in the 1990s with the global movement against violence against women. Landmark events were the adoption of General Recommendation No. 14 on female circumcision¹ (1990) and General Recommendation No. 19² on violence against women (1992) by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee explicitly included violence against women as a matter falling under the scope of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

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