

FMG AND THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER – BASED VIOLENCE: THE NEW TOOLS FOR EMANCIPATING INTERNATIONAL FEMINISM

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One of the most dramatic forms of female violence is FGM (female genital mutilation), also known as *infibulation*. It is a procedure that involves the partial or total removal of the female external genitals for non-medical reasons, but linked to the tradition that characterizes the culture to which one belongs. The present work aims to deepen the aspects on the beginning of a new era for women's rights, as it is happening in Sudan, and on the evolution of the methods adopted to combat these practices, just think of the invention of the app "I-cut" by five Kenyan students.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to give an accurate answer as to the real reasons why some 200 million women and their families have accepted such brutal practices. In the first chapter, in fact, analyzing the different elements that make up the theme of FGM, this phenomenon is a problem that is difficult to describe because its origins are uncertain, its spread is in areas distant from each other and practices change according to the ethnic group to which it belongs. Over the centuries this practice has taken on a religious dimension and as such has been adopted by the people who practice it. In reality there are also other motivations, which can be sexual, social, moral or aesthetic. For example, for many girls, this practice means abandoning their childhood and becoming part of the adult world. Furthermore, through the mutilation of her genitals a woman will be identified as a member of her community and her refusal condemning herself to marginalization.



KEY POINTS

New era for Women's Rights

Three recent cases of positive signals:

1. **Waris Dirie, from nomadic to UN ambassador for the fight against FGM**
2. **<<I-cut>>, an app against genital mutilation**
3. **The measure of the Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.**

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FGM has posed new challenges over the years for political agendas both against violence against women and against the practices themselves. In the second chapter, we proceed with the analysis of legal sources, both international and national, which have developed over time. In particular, one of the objectives of the United Nations and many other international territorial organizations such as the African Union and the European Union is to oppose any proceedings harmful to women through conventions, declarations and resolutions.

In a supranational context, FGM practices are in contrast to:

- ⇒ **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;**
- ⇒ **The Convention on the Rights of the Child;**
- ⇒ **The Beijing Declaration;**
- ⇒ **Resolution no. 28 of 2003 issued by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, establishing the International Day of Zero Tolerance against Female Genital Mutilation on 6 February.**
- ⇒ **The Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Women's Rights in Africa of 2003, known as the Maputo Protocol.**

The western dimension of the problem, on the other hand, began because of the incessant migration to Europe. The European Union has, then, been active in the fight against FGM practices with:

- ⇒ **The resolutions of the European Parliament of 24 and 26 March 2009** condemning all types of FGM;
- ⇒ **The European Parliament Resolution of 14 June 2012** on the abolition of FGM;
- ⇒ **The Istanbul Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014** denouncing all forms of violence based on gender discrimination. In particular, **Article 38** deals specifically with the problem of FGM.
- ⇒ **In Italy, with Law no. 7 of 9 January 2006,**

“Provisions concerning the prevention and prohibition of female genital mutilation practices”, Article 583-bis of the Italian Criminal Code was introduced, which sanctions female genital mutilation practices with very severe penalties.

The third and last chapter examines the new tool for emancipating international feminism that are the importance of education and correct information through testimonies, awareness campaigns and technology. These elements should not be underestimated because they play a fundamental role in fostering social change. In this work three recent cases of positive signals towards the end of a nightmare are analyzed:

1. **Waris Dirie, from nomadic to UN ambassador for the fight against FGM.** She was born in Somalia in 1965 between 4 and 5 years old and she was infibulated. After hell and the distressing prospect of an arranged marriage with a much older man, Waris flees her village. She leaves for London and it is the beginning of a new life and a dazzling career as a model. Today, she uses her image to illuminate a terrifying tradition still respected today in 28 countries around the world. The model thus becomes the spokesperson for the UN “Face to Face” campaign to break the practice of female genital mutilation.
2. **<< I-cut >>, an app against genital mutilation.** A group of five Kenyan students developed an app to help victims and potential victims of FGM. The idea came after one of their schoolmates had to leave school immediately after being cut and had to get married. Their candidacy for the Technovation World Pitch Summit marks an important step in the fight against female genital mutilation, and encourages young people to play an active role in their community.
3. **The measure of the Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.** In Sudan, after the key role women and girls in the protests against the dictatorship Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in August 2019, the Constitutional Declaration on Rights and Freedoms was approved and the



new regulation on the prohibition of FGM will be included in a new article of the Penal Code. Not even a year after the fall of the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir, accused today of genocide and crimes against humanity, Sudan has begun its slow and laborious reconstruction.

We have seen, therefore, how once the female part has the courage to say enough, has the courage to break the silence and change its actions, the game is done and that is what is happening. Therefore, new action plans should be developed to put an end to this practice. To be effective, these plans will need to include budgetary resources for sexual and reproductive health services, youth education and legal services. That's all is very important because the more educated mothers and relatives are, the lower the risks of their daughters being mutilated and the more girls attend school, the easier they can confront other people who reject the practice and be aware that the woman does not need to be mutilated to prove her courage and dignity.

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