



What the White Ribbon Campaign Says About... Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of torture and violence against women. It is not a cultural practice that needs to be respected.

- The World Health Organisation defines FGM as 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons'
- Complications include infection, severe pain and shock, fatal haemorrhaging, painful urination, psychological damage, and pregnancy and child birth complications (FORWARD)
- In 2001, an estimated 66,000 women in England and Wales had been subject to female genital mutilation* (Home Office)
- In the UK alone, over 24,000 girls are estimated to be at risk of FGM (FORWARD study)

Why FGM Occurs:

- As FORWARD states, justifications for FGM include: family honour; increasing male sexual pleasure; preservation of virginity; social acceptance; custom and tradition; and the mistaken belief that it is a religious requirement, improves hygiene, and enhances fertility

What All Men Can Do to Stop FGM:

- Wear a white ribbon – a pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women
- Acknowledge that FGM is a form of violence against women, not simply a cultural practice
- Support organisations such as FORWARD

**While some men are part of the problem,
all men can be part of the solution!**