

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

6 February

Female Genital Mutilation: A Serious Violation of Human Rights

“There is no reason, no justification, no excuse for female genital mutilation.” - Ban Ki-moon.

Every year on 6 February, the world observes the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to draw attention to a harmful practice that continues to affect millions of women and girls globally. Recognized by the United Nations, this day emphasizes that FGM is not a cultural or religious necessity but a **serious violation of fundamental human rights**. It calls upon governments, civil society, and communities to strengthen efforts to eliminate the practice in all its forms.

Female genital mutilation refers to all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. The meaning of female genital mutilation has been judicially interpreted to encompass any *“injury or damage that is more than superficial and which renders the body part in question imperfect or irreparably damaged in some fashion,”* as observed by the High Court of Australia in **The Queen v A2 and Ors. (MANU/AUSH/0035/2019)**.



**World Health
Organization**

According to the **World Health Organization**, FGM has no health benefits and causes severe physical and psychological harm. Girls subjected to this practice face immediate risks such as excessive bleeding and infection, as well as long-term consequences including chronic pain, complications during childbirth, and enduring emotional trauma.

FGM and the Call for Zero Tolerance

FGM is internationally condemned as a violation of health, dignity, equality, and freedom from torture, rooted in gender inequality. Global human rights instruments, including the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, explicitly prohibit it. **Zero tolerance** affirms no form of FGM is justifiable, and its eradication requires laws, education, community engagement, and survivor support.

The world affirms that every girl has the right to dignity, bodily integrity, and a life free from violence and FGM must end everywhere.