

## **OPEN LETTER AND SIGN-ON STATEMENT**

### **THE U.S. MUST PRESERVE INTEGRITY OF LAW AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING AND CONDEMN ITS HARMFUL CONFLATION WITH GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE**

The [U.S. End FGM/C Network](#), the [Global Platform for Action to End FGM/C](#) and the [Americas Alliance to End FGM/C](#) are joined by 92 civil society organizations from across the United States and around the world in co-signing this open letter urging the U.S. Government to preserve the integrity of the existing federal law prohibiting female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and to reject all attempts to amend the law which would shift the focus of the law away from protecting persons at risk of FGM/C.

This letter is in response to the introduction of [H.R. 3492](#) in the U.S. Congress on May 19, 2025 by Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene. The Bill seeks to expand the scope of [U.S. Federal law 18 U.S. Code § 116 'Female Genital Mutilation.'](#) to prohibit and criminalize the provision of gender-affirming care for anyone under the age of 18, or as described by the Bill, to prohibit “genital mutilation” of minors, which is defined as “any surgery performed for the purpose of changing the body of such individual to correspond to a sex that differs from their biological sex.” Concerningly, the Bill has already been approved by the House Judiciary Committee on 10th June 2025.

As an international consortium of civil society organizations, survivors, activists and grassroots representatives united to end FGM/C across the world, we are deeply concerned by this redefinition of FGM/C and the impacts it may have on the lives of those seeking gender affirmative care. We are profoundly concerned about the ripple effects such legislation may trigger across the globe. In a time of intensifying backlash against gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights, this redefinition could undermine decades of progress not only in the U.S but everywhere in the world.

#### **Impeding efforts to end FGM/C in the United States**

FGM/C is a specific form of violence against girls that impacts [over 230 million women and girls](#) worldwide, and takes place [in over 94 countries](#). FGM/C affects over half a million women and girls in the United States alone.

FGM/C has been a federal crime in the United States since 1996. Current U.S. Federal law 18 U.S. Code § 116 ‘Female Genital Mutilation,’ as amended by the [STOP FGM Act](#), clearly defines FGM/C as “all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.” This definition on the specific issue of FGM/C is legally agreed upon and utilized across the U.S. and around the world and is approved by the [World Health Organization](#). The Congressional findings and purpose of the STOP FGM Act state that “female genital mutilation is recognized internationally as a human rights violation and a form of child abuse, gender discrimination, and violence

against women and girls. Female genital mutilation is a global problem whose eradication requires international cooperation and enforcement at the national level.”

FGM/C is performed without the consent of the child, has no medical benefits and causes short and long-term physical, sexual, and psychological harm to survivors. It is a child rights and women’s rights issue, and is an extreme form of violence against women and girls that demands our urgent attention, both globally and domestically within the U.S. Any attempt to weaponize anti-FGM/C laws to shift focus away from protecting girls from FGM/C is extremely harmful. Expanding the scope of the federal bill will dilute current legal protection against FGM/C and impede efforts of prosecutors, government agencies, CSOs and community-based organizations in the U.S. to prevent this specific form of violence and provide services to those affected by FGM/C.

### **Incorrect and Harmful Conflation with Gender Affirming Care**

HR 3492, along with several previous statements issued by the federal government in recent months, including an [Executive Order](#) in January and [Department of Justice Memo](#) in April, all falsely conflated FGM/C with gender-affirming care. In addition to fostering a misleading comparison, these efforts seek to exploit the condemnation of FGM/C to provoke opposition to trans-related healthcare, while obscuring the fundamental difference between the two issues.

**Gender-affirming care cannot be equated with FGM/C.** Importantly, several key distinctions differentiate the two. FGM/C is performed in socially coercive contexts where culture and tradition pressure parents and girls to be subjected to this human rights violation, which is considered a form of torture under international human rights law. FGM/C is carried out on a girl child to control their sexuality. It is a way to limit a girl’s choices and agency over her own body. FGM/C compromises a person’s bodily autonomy, leading to negative physical and mental health effects that can last a lifetime. Meanwhile, gender-affirming care is an evidence-based and medically necessary form of care that includes a diverse array of interventions to align one’s identity with their sexual characteristics; such care is only provided with the consent of the individual. [Research](#) shows that gender-affirming care leads to decreased rates of depression, improvement in psychosocial functioning, and minimal long-term side effects.

### **The U.S. Government must protect the integrity of existing anti-FGM/C law**

We strongly oppose any legislation that conflates FGM/C with gender-affirming care and attempts to stigmatize, marginalize, or scapegoat individuals and communities, including trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming persons. We stand in unwavering solidarity with the local activists in the U.S. who are working tirelessly to uphold and implement the existing law on FGM/C and in resisting efforts to criminalize the provision of gender-affirming care for minors.

The STOP FGM Act is one of the few bills that received full bipartisan support in both houses of Congress before it was signed into law by President Trump in 2020. With U.S. support, the national and global movement to end FGM/C and protect girls from this specific violence has

grown rapidly. Discussions on FGM/C must remain accurate and rooted in legal and human rights frameworks. Conflating a non-consensual, harmful practice with essential medical care risks undermining efforts to effectively address both issues.

We believe in approaching ending FGM/C with understanding, empathy, and sensitivity to prevent discrimination, targeting, blame, and shaming. As such:

1. We urge the U.S. Congress to unequivocally reject H.R. 3492.
2. We call on the federal government and all states to refrain from falsely equating FGM/C and gender-affirming care and to focus instead on the prevention of FGM/C, thus promoting the protection of human rights for all.
3. We invite all people in the United States to stand with us in this endeavor to foster an environment where the rights and the dignity of every person are upheld and defended. Fill out this [Call to Action](#) to call on your Congress member to vote against H.R. 3492.
4. We urge decision makers, civil society actors, activists, and survivors across the globe to consistently show solidarity with those impacted by such legislations and strongly reject any attempts to instrumentalize and weaponize FGM/C to promote exclusionary and discriminatory political agendas.

### **List of Signatories**

1. #StandWithHer
2. ACCM (UK)
3. African Women Rights Organisation (AWRA)
4. Asian Pacific Resource & Research Center for Women
5. Association CO-GNA Mère de l'enfant
6. Association des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs (AEJT)
7. Aura Freedom International
8. Ayuda
9. Birth Nutrition
10. British Black Anti Poverty Network
11. Center for Gender and Refugee Studies
12. Centre de Formation en Mécanismes de Protection des Droits Humains (CFMPDH), Benin
13. Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria

14. Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)
15. CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
16. Circuit Pointe Charity Foundation
17. Coalition des femmes-filles handicapées féministes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
18. Community Care Collective
19. Covenant Foundation for Girls (COFGIRLS)
20. Doctors on Ground (DnG)
21. Ekiti State
22. End FGM Africa Network
23. End FGM Canada Network
24. END FGM EU Network
25. END FGM/C Network Africa
26. Equality Now
27. ERA Coalition
28. ESWA
29. Farah Fundaition Development
30. Federatie COC Nederland
31. FGM/C Advisory Committee
32. Fondation Zenab Sangare
33. Fòs Feminista
34. Fundacion Derechos Humanos Equidad y Genero (FunDheg)
35. Grow Well
36. Highlands Women Human Rights Defenders Movement
37. Humanity For The World (HFTW)
38. Humanity for Women and Children
39. ILGA-North American and the Caribbean
40. Illinois Accountability Initiative

41. Immigration Center for Women and Children
42. International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL)
43. International Federation of Business and Professional Women
44. International Survivors of Family Empowered-iSAFE
45. Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
46. Kalkal Human Rights Development Organization (KAHRDO)
47. KAN-WIN
48. Kenya Council of Imams and Ulamaa
49. Laal NYC
50. LastMile4D
51. Magnuson Trust
52. Malaysian Doctors for Women and Children
53. Mother Africa
54. Muslims for Progressive Values
55. NAFGEM Tanzania
56. National Coalition Against Harmful Practices (NACAHP) Liberia
57. Network Against FGM in Somaliland- NAFIS NETWORK
58. ONG éducation Universelle
59. Orchid Project
60. Outright International
61. PAI
62. Qalbumaryam
63. Raksha Inc
64. Restorative Justice Coalition
65. Rural Development Foundation (RDF)
66. Sahiyo U.S. Inc.

67. Sakhi for South Asia Survivors
68. Salamander Trust
69. Same Boat Consulting
70. Settlement Services International
71. Society of Gender Professionals
72. Solidarity Yaad International
73. Solutions for Igniting Social Transformation
74. South Asia Network
75. South Asian SOAR
76. Spread Truth
77. Spread Truth Africa
78. STEWARDWOMEN
79. Tahirih Justice Center
80. Taves Generation
81. The Advocates for Human Rights
82. The Girls' Agenda
83. Together for Girls
84. Umoja Development Organization
85. Université de Montréal
86. Voix de Femmes
87. Washington Coalition to End FGM/C
88. WeSpeakOut
89. White Ribbon Alliance UK
90. Without Exception Films
91. Women Deliver
92. Youth Association for Development (YAD)

