

Orchid Project statement on the death of a one-month-old baby in The Gambia

Orchid Project is heartbroken by the death of a one-month-old baby in Wellingara, The Gambia as a result of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). The baby suffered from severe bleeding reportedly following FGM/C and was pronounced dead on arrival at Bundung Maternal and Child Health Hospital on 10th August 2025.

Our thoughts are with the family and community members impacted by this tragic loss and activists who tirelessly work to end this human rights violation and gender-based violence. This incident underscores FGM/C as a silent epidemic which claims the life of one girl every 12 minutes in high-prevalence countries in Africa, where it is also ranked as the 4th leading cause of death amongst girls.¹

Despite FGM/C being outlawed in The Gambia, 72.6% of women and girls have been subjected to FGM/C, placing the country among those with the highest prevalence.² This case highlights the need to uphold the ban on FGM/C and strengthen its enforcement, especially in light of recent efforts to overturn the law.

We stand in solidarity with those in The Gambia fighting for an end to FGM/C. Whilst this case has received media attention, many go unknown. We call on governments, NGOs and donors to collectively commit to ending FGM/C and its harmful consequences.

¹ Flowe, H. D., Rockey, J. C., and Orchid Project. (2025). The Hidden Toll: A Girl Dies Every 12 Minutes as a Result of FGM/C. Zenodo. <https://lnkd.in/gYF4KYDA>

² Orchid Project (2025) FGM/C in the Gambia: Data Update. Available at <https://lnkd.in/g4VMgA4s>