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OUTLAWED RITE

200 girls face the knife today

Chiefs cannot fight the vice claiming they fear a curse could befall them

By NATION Team

For more than 200 girls who are lined up for circumcision in the North Rift today it will not be Christmas as usual.

More than 100 school-going girls aged between nine and 14 years will undergo the rite in three locations in Marakwet East constituency.

The exercise will be done in secrecy after the Government warned parents and circumcisors of prosecution.

The local chiefs are scared of exposing the perpetrators lest they be victims of community curse, a local chief told the Nation.

The locations in which the rite will be carried out include Kapen and Embobut in Tot sub-district.

Marakwet county council vice-chairman Stephen Kapchila said the locals needed more civic education on the effects of the outdated practice.

He said last December holidays were not conducive due to the General Election and the chaos that followed.

The outlawed practice had drasti-

cally declined in the district following massive campaign and the introduction of alternative rite of passage spearheaded by Cooperative Development assistant minister Linah Kilimo, who is the area MP.

In West Pokot, Ms Lilian Plapan, the executive director of Setat women's group, which fights against the vice, said that 100 other underage girls were being lined up for the cut.

She called on the Government to be more vigilant in the next one month, saying several girls were lined-up for circumcision in Mt Elgon and Baringo.

Mrs Plapan said chiefs alone could not fight the vice and called on the Government to involve Administration Police.

Rescued

Meanwhile, some of the girls who had been rescued from forced circumcision in Kuria West and Kuria East districts are said to have been cut soon after they underwent the alternative rite of passage.

A human rights official, Mr Deus Chacha, said at least 100 girls out of the 360 were circumcised soon after they left the Komotoo Maranatha Mission Church where they had stayed for two months.

The girls were allowed to go home this week to join their families in the Christmas and New Year festivities.

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