**Why does female genital cutting continue to be a justified practice in SSA**

By Rachael Nagaddya, 19th August 2025.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) or Female Circumcision (FC) is a harmful cultural and traditional practice that involves total or partial removal of the external parts of the female genitalia or any other injury to the genital organ. Unlike male circumcision, FGM produces no known health benefits, neither is it performed for medical reasons; rather, it is an initiation rite of passage to womanhood that aims to ensure premarital virginity and marital fidelity by reducing a woman’s desire for extramarital sexual acts. Not only does the procedure violate human rights, the annual cost of obstetric complications thereof is estimated at more than 3.7 million dollars. The [WHO](https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/) identified four main types of FGM/C in which victims may die due to haemorrhage or septic shock, or experience considerable physical, psychological and sexual complications.

The prevalence of FGM spreads across the middle, east and west of Africa, as well as Asia where, [UNICEF](https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/) estimated that 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut, 92 million girls 10years and older of whom are specifically from Africa. The most recent data shows that the practice is most and least done in Sierra Leone and Uganda with 84 percent and 1.4 percent of women mutilated respectively.