

Help and Support

If you or your daughter are affected by or at risk of FGM/C or CEFM, or if you are concerned about any girl who may be at risk of FGM/C or CEFM and need support, ask for help.

If you want to remain anonymous, phone

Violence against Women helpline

 **08000 116 016**

The helpline is free to call and is operated 24hrs a day.

If you wish to receive advice, please contact

LESSAN e.V. – Be the CHANGEMAKER!

 **0176 - 394 519 44**


 **info@lessan.eu**

FGM/C and CEFM may be grounds for asylum. If you had to leave your home country because of FGM/C or CEFM and need help with your asylum procedure, please contact

PRO ASYL

 **069 - 242 314 20**

 **proasyl@proasyl.de**

 **If you need help or support, do not wait!
The counselling centres are able to help.**



Contact details



LESSAN e.V. is a non-profit organisation that promotes the social and professional integration of people with a migration background through transcultural projects. LESSAN's main areas of focus are awareness raising and training on female genital mutilation, violence against women and girls, and racism and discrimination. Lessan e.V. also offers individual assistance.

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TERRE DES FEMMES
Menschenrechte für die Frau e.V.

TERRE DES FEMMES – Menschenrechte für die Frau e.V. is a non-profit women's rights organisation that supports girls and women through advocacy and public outreach, campaigning and lobbying, international networking, and the promotion of individual projects. TDF's core topics are FGM, CEFM, honour crimes, women trafficking and prostitution, and domestic and sexual violence.

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Femmes Entraide et Autonomie (FEA) is a non-profit organisation based in France. FEA works towards eradicating harmful practices and improving access to rights, healthcare and services for women and youths, particularly those with a migrant background. FEA activities are concerned with reception, information and orientation, awareness raising and training.

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HELP END

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Child, Early and Forced Marriage!



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Myths and Facts

... about Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

“FGM/C is a religious requirement.”

There is no evidence for a religious background. FGM/C is a cultural practice that is older than all monolithic religions.



“FGM/C increases a woman’s fertility.”

FGM/C does not increase a woman’s fertility. On the contrary, **FGM/C often causes problems** during pregnancy and birth. It can even lead to the death of the child and/or the mother.

“We have to respect our culture’s traditions and customs.”



A lot of traditions have benefits for the women’s well-being and health. But **FGM/C does not have any benefit for women’s health**. Contrarily, it has irreversible harmful consequences.

... about Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)

“By marrying my daughter off, I protect her from sexual assault.”

CEFM make girls and young women more vulnerable to experience intimate **partner violence, domestic violence** and/or **sexual abuse**.



“Unmarried girls and women are worthless.”

CEFM **deprives girls of education and economic opportunities** and puts their health and safety at risk. If you know a girl who is affected by CEFM you can offer help and guide her to support services.

“Marriages are a family issue in which I should not interfere.”



The worth of a woman does not depend on her marital status. Every woman should have the right to decide who and whether she wants to marry.

FGM/C and CEFM are forms of gender-based violence and may be grounds for asylum.



Many girls and women affected by FGM/C are also affected by or vulnerable to CEFM.

What is Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)?



FGM/C is a practice that involves changing, altering or removing part of a girl or woman’s external female genitalia without a medical or health reason or benefits.

FGM/C is also known as female circumcision or cutting, or by other names such as sunnah, mknshab, khatna, niaka, tahir, megrez, khatnauracion and khitan, among others.



¹UNICEF, 2016

FGM/C and its consequences

FGM/C causes **serious physical and psychological harm** to girls and women, including:

- Constant pain
- Repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- Excessive bleeding, keloid scarring and cysts
- Menstrual problems
- Complications during pregnancy and delivery, which can lead to death of the woman and/or child
- Sexual difficulties
- Problems passing urine or incontinence
- Feelings of anxiety and depression, flashbacks and loss of self-esteem

FGM/C and the law

FGM/C is a severe form of violence against women and girls and a human rights violation. It is **illegal** to perform FGM/C in Europe and abroad. It is also illegal to arrange for your child to be taken abroad for the procedure or to help someone to carry out FGM/C in any way. Anyone found guilty of this may be punished by **imprisonment** for several years and/or a fine.

In the EU, all forms of FGM/C are illegal. Offenders will be prosecuted.

What is Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)?



Child or early marriage is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age. Child marriage disproportionately affects girls.

A forced marriage is where one or both parties do not fully or freely consent to the marriage, and pressure, threats, coercion or violence are used. A child marriage is always also a forced marriage.



²WHO

CEFM and its consequences

Harmful social and health consequences of CEFM may include:

- Social isolation
- Domestic violence, trauma
- Dropping out of school, which is usual and leads to the deprivation of education, health and long-term prospects (and can therefore lead to entrenched poverty)
- Complications in childbirth or during pregnancy, which can be fatal
- A high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (including HIV)

CEFM and the law

CEFM is a **human rights violation** and is prohibited by international law. Several EU countries, including Germany and France, have already **banned** child marriage. Forced marriage is a specific **criminal offence** in some EU member states, including Germany. Child marriages contracted abroad are not recognised and may be annulled.

CEFM threatens the health and life of girls and women as well as their prospects for the future.