

Summer Holidays are for Fun not Pain

Summer holidays are almost upon us. Some adults from communities that practise Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) take their young daughters and girls under their care for 'summer holidays' abroad with the intention of subjecting them to FGM while they are there.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in conjunction with British Medical Association (BMA), Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (FORWARD), Africans Unite against Child Abuse, (AFRUCA), Development Support Agency (DSA) and the Somali Information Integration Centre (SIIC), are working to inform all parents/carers that the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to participate in any sort of arrangement for FGM to be performed on another, inside or outside of the UK. The Metropolitan Police will safeguard any girl believed to be at risk and prosecute offenders.

The penalty for aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring or carrying out FGM either inside or outside of the UK is 14 years of imprisonment or a fine or both.

FORWARD estimates, based on data from The International Centre for Reproductive Health (2004), that within the UK around 279,500 women have undergone FGM and each year approximately 22, 000 girls under 16 years are at risk of becoming victims of FGM.

FGM has very severe health consequences including death. The procedure is extremely painful. There is a high risk of developing infections and spreading diseases including HIV/AIDS. There are many significant lifelong medical, psychological and emotional consequences for victims. In June 2006 the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that in the African context 10 – 20 babies die per 1000 deliveries as a result of this practice. FGM is a clear violation of the human rights of the girl and is prohibited by many international and regional human rights conventions.

FGM is a cultural practice, which has no basis in any religion.

The MPS, above agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations want to raise awareness of the health and legal implications of this crime and to empower children vulnerable to this practice. We want to educate parents and carers about the consequences of arranging FGM, as well as raising awareness amongst professionals.

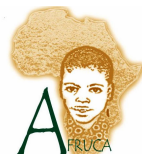
The MPS, BMA, FORWARD, AFRUCA, DSA and Somali Information & Integration Centre appeal to families from FGM practising communities to protect your female children from the suffering and devastating consequences of Female Genital Mutilation.



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