Ban FGM Campaign

Adoption of the draft resolution
“Intensifying Global Efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation”
by the UNGA Third Committee

Press Review
26-28 November 2012
SUMMARY

On 26 November 2012, immediately after the adoption of the draft resolution “Intensifying Global Efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation” by the UNGA Third Committee, NPWJ issued a press release welcoming this result, in English and Italian, which was largely disseminated to our Press Contacts in New York (including the foreign correspondents accredited to the UN), in Europe and in Africa.

**Trustlaw / Thomson Reuters Foundation**, with whom we were in close contact in advance of the vote at the UN, dedicated an article which substantially quotes the press release issued by NPWJ.

**Associated Press** also published an article in which part of Alivilda Jablonko’s statement on behalf of No Peace Without Justice was quoted.


NPWJ Press release has also been integrally published by APA (African Press Agency), which was successively taken by the Nigerian newspaper OsunDefender and Star Africa.

We have also been approached by Al Jazeera for a possible interview in the coming days.

NPWJ Press release in Italian was also integrally published by Agenzia Parlamentare in Italy.

Niccolo’ Figa-Talamanca also made an interview for the Notiziario Radicale on Radio Radicale.
NEW YORK (TrustLaw)— A United Nations committee voted to ban female genital mutilation on Monday, a landmark move led by African countries that almost guarantees adoption of the resolution by the full global body in December.

An estimated 140 million girls and women around the world have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful traditional practice under which all or parts of the external genitalia are removed, often by other female members of the family. The procedure, often done with crude implements under unsanitary conditions, can result in serious physical and emotional damage and in some instances can prove fatal.

Not rooted in any religion, the procedure is typically done to girls between infancy and the age of 15 and is often considered a rite of passage preparing the girl for marriage. Traditionally, families do it for a number of reasons including the belief that it preserves a girl’s virginity, prevents promiscuity after marriage and enhances male sexual pleasure.

"Notably, the draft resolution urges States to ‘condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilations, and to take all necessary measures, including enacting and enforcing legislation to prohibit female genital mutilations and to protect women and girls from this form of violence and to end impunity’," said Alvilda Jablonko, coordinator of the FGM program of No Peace Without Justice, in a statement.

The adoption of the draft resolution represents the culmination of years of advocacy work by No Peace Without Justice and its partners in the International NGO Coalition to Ban FGM Worldwide, which include the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), Euronet-FGM, La Palabre, Manifesto 99 and Equality Now.

It is believed that 3 million girls are subjected to the procedure every year in Africa alone, where FGM is prevalent in 28 countries and near universal in nations including Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Mali and Guinea.

FGM is also practiced in parts of the Middle East and Asia, including Yemen, Iraqi Kurdistan and Indonesia, as well as among industrialised countries with immigrant populations.

While the resolution will not be enforceable by the UN, the fact that it was introduced by African countries is thought to give it added weight in the region.

Twenty of the 28 African countries where FGM is widely practiced have banned the procedure but enforcement is generally weak and prosecutions rare. An exception is Burkina Faso, which has strong laws against FGM, the support of traditional chiefs and a record of hundreds of prosecutions against those who inflict it on girls.

Although typically performed by women using crude implements, such as razor blades or broken glass, a new and growing trend, acknowledged in the draft resolution, is the authorization for hospitals to perform FGM in nations like Indonesia.

The draft resolution also urges the UN Secretary-General to ensure that all UN agencies dealing with women and girls “take into account the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls against female genital mutilations in their country programmes” and to commission an in-depth study and report on the practice of FGM globally.

(Additional reporting by Emma Batha)

(Editing by Stella Dawson)
UN committee calls for ban on female circumcision
By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press
26 November 2012

http://tinyurl.com/cwv4psp

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Campaigners against female circumcision scored a major victory Monday with the approval by a key U.N. committee of a resolution calling for a global ban on female genital mutilation.

The resolution, adopted by consensus by the U.N. General Assembly's human rights committee, calls the practice harmful and a serious threat to the psychological, sexual and reproductive health of women and girls. It calls on the U.N.'s 193 member states to condemn the practice, known as FGM, and launch education campaigns for girls and boys, women and men, to eliminate it. It also urges all countries to enact and enforce legislation to prohibit FGM, to protect women and girls "from this form of violence," and to end impunity for violators.

With 110 sponsors, the resolution is virtually certain to be approved by the full General Assembly, which is expected to take it up in the second half of December. Although not legally binding, assembly resolutions reflect international concerns and carry moral and political weight.

Italy's U.N. Ambassador Cesare Maria Ragaglini, who has been working with African partners for a ban, called the resolution "a breakthrough in the international campaign to end the harmful practice of FGM."

"I think that together we can change the fate of many young girls around the world, and today this goal appears closer than ever," he said. "The resolution, in condemning the practice and promoting social and educational programs, is ... the beginning of a new journey."

The centuries-old practice stems from beliefs that FGM controls women's sexuality, enhances fertility, or is required by religious belief — although both Muslim and Christian leaders have spoken out against it.

The procedure involves the removal of a girl's clitoris and sometimes also other genital parts, usually in childhood or early adolescence. Critics say it can lead to painful sexual intercourse, complications in childbirth, and eliminates any pleasure for women during sex.

The U.N. said in 2010 that about 70 million girls and women had undergone the procedure, and the World Health Organization said about 6,000 girls were circumcised every day.

According to Amnesty International, FGM is commonplace in 28 countries in Africa as well as in Yemen, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia and among certain ethnic groups in South America, but it is also a worldwide concern because it is also practiced by immigrants in diaspora communities.

Jose Luis Diaz, Amnesty International's U.N. representative, said this is the first time the General Assembly's human rights committee has addressed the problem.

"FGM is an indictment of us all — that a girl or young woman can be held down and mutilated is a violation of her human rights and, shockingly, an estimated three million girls are at risk each year," he said.

Alvilda Jablonko, coordinator of the FGM program at the organization No Peace Without Justice, applauded the committee's action as "a landmark step in the international campaign to foster global leadership" in the campaign against the practice.

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The Guardian
27 November 2012
http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/nov/27/un-ban-female-genital-mutilation

ABC News
26 November 2012
http://abcnews.go.com/m/story?id=17815276

Washington Post
26 November 2012
http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/key-un-committee-approves-resolution-calling-for-a-global-ban-on-female-genital-mutilation/2012/11/26/426b7f0a-3839-11e2-9258-ac7c78d5c680_story.html

The Huffington Post (US)
27 November 2012

The Seattle Times
26 November 2012

Canadian Press /Huffington Post
27 November 2012
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/11/27/key-un-committee-approves_n_2195467.html
Practice harmful, serious threat

Call for ban on female mutilation

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 27, (AP): Campaigners against female circumcision scored a major victory Monday with the approval by a key UN committee of a resolution calling for a global ban on female genital mutilation.

The resolution, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly’s human rights committee, calls the practice harmful and a serious threat to the psychological, sexual and reproductive health of women and girls.

It calls on the UN’s 193 member states to condemn the practice, known as FGM, and launch education campaigns for girls and boys, women and men, to eliminate it. It also urges all countries to enact and enforce legislation to prohibit FGM, to protect women and girls “from this form of violence,” and to end impunity for violators.

With 110 sponsors, the resolution is virtually certain to be approved by the full General Assembly, which is expected to take it up in the second half of December. Although not legally binding, assembly resolutions reflect international concerns and carry moral and political weight.

Italy’s UN Ambassador Cesare Maria Ragaglini, who has been working with African partners for a ban, called the resolution “a breakthrough in the international campaign to end the harmful practice of FGM.”

“We will continue to spare no efforts with a final objective: ending female genital mutilations in one generation. Today, this goal appears closer than ever,” said Cesare Ragaglini, UN ambassador for Italy, which has played a leading role in international efforts to eradicate the practice.

He called the UN resolution a “powerful tool” against widespread resistance because it would take condemnation and calls for new measures to another level.

“It is up to us now to exploit it in a more effective way,” Ragaglini said.

Goal

“I think that together we can change the fate of many young girls around the world, and today this goal appears closer than ever,” he said. “The resolution, in condemning the practice and promoting social and educational programs, is the beginning of a new journey.”

The centuries-old practice stems from beliefs that FGM controls women’s sexuality, enhances fertility, or is required by religious beliefs, although both Muslim and Christian leaders have spoken out against it.

The procedure involves the removal of a girl’s clitoris and sometimes also other genital parts, usually in childhood or early adolescence. Critics say it can lead to painful sexual intercourse, complications in childbirth, and eliminates any pleasure for women during sex.

The UN said in 2010 that about 70 million girls and women had undergone the procedure, and the World Health Organization said about 6,000 girls were circumcised every day.

According to Amnesty International, FGM is commonplace in 28 countries in Africa as well as in Yemen, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia and among certain ethnic groups in South America, but it is also a worldwide concern because it is also practiced by immigrants in diaspora communities.

Jose Luis Diaz, Amnesty International’s UN representative, said this is the first time the General Assembly’s human rights committee has addressed the problem.

“FGM is an indictment of us all — a girl or young woman can be held down and mutilated is a violation of her human rights and, shockingly, an estimated three million girls are at risk each year,” he said.

Avilda Jablonko, coordinator of the FGM program at the organization No Peace Without Justice, applauded the committee’s action as “a landmark step in the international campaign to foster global leadership” in the campaign against the practice.

Though outlawed in most nations, the measure represents the first time the traditional practice in African and Middle East nations has been denounced at such a high level in the United Nations.

More than 110 countries, including more than 50 African nations, co-sponsored the resolution in the General Assembly’s rights committee, which called on states to “complement punitive measures with awareness-raising and educational activities” to eliminate female genital mutilation.
APA-New York, (USA) On Monday the Social, Humanitarian Cultural Affairs Committee (commonly referred to as the Third Committee) of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the draft resolution “Intensifying Global Efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation” submitted by the African Group at the UN last October, and the General Assembly is expected to consider its adoption in December in the framework of its 67th session.

According to a prelease from No Peace Without Justice, the formal adoption Monday of the draft resolution is the result of years of advocacy efforts to bring worldwide attention to the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), spearheaded by an ever-expanding Ban FGM Coalition, composed of No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ), the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), Euronet-FGM, and the NGOs La Palabre, Manifesto 99 and Equality Now.

A statement by Alvilda Jablonko, Coordinator of the FGM Program of No Peace Without Justice said; “No Peace Without Justice, together with its partners in the International NGO Coalition to Ban FGM Worldwide, applaud the formal adoption by the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly of a draft resolution on female genital mutilation, which signals a landmark step in the international campaign to foster global leadership in the fight against FGM as a wide-scale and blatant violation of the fundamental human rights of women and girls. The text adopted today is an essential contribution to the United Nations General Assembly addressing this human rights violation as a global issue affecting the daily lives of women and girls worldwide.

“Notably, the draft resolution urges states to ‘condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilations, and to take all necessary measures, including enacting and enforcing legislation to prohibit female genital mutilations and to protect women and girls from this forms of violence, and to end impunity’.

We look forward to its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, in December this year, which would demonstrate the strong commitment of the international community to support the actions of those member states and activists which have been at the forefront of the battle to challenge and put an end to this human rights violation both nationally and, increasingly, internationally”.

Over the past years, the members of the Ban FGM Coalition have collaborated on several initiatives to raise awareness internationally about the need for a UNGA resolution banning this human rights violation, gathering the support of human rights activists, women’s organizations, parliamentarians and government representatives from throughout Africa and Europe.

Tangible momentum towards a resolution has been gathering speed over this past year. A key step in the process was the July 2011 decision by the heads of state and government of the African Union in support of a resolution by the General Assembly.

The African Group at the UN took action to implement the will of the heads of state by introducing a CSW Decision at the Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2012, recommending that the issue of FGM, until now discussed only within the context of the CSW, be formally considered by the General Assembly under the agenda item “Advancement of Women. In July 2012, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the CSW recommendation and requested that the issue of female genital mutilation be added to the agenda of the 67th General Assembly.
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ONU: RADICALI, BENE TESTO DI RISOLUZIONE DEL COMITATO DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE
Agenzia Parlamentare
Lunedì 26 Novembre 2012, 19:20


(AGENPARL) - New York, 26 nov - Oggi il Comitato per gli Affari Sociali, Culturali ed umanitari (solitamente indicato come “Terzo Comitato”) dell’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite ha adottato formalmente il testo di Risoluzione dal titolo “Intensificare gli sforzi globali per l’eliminazione delle mutilazioni genitali femminili”, depositato dal Gruppo Africano presso le Nazioni Unite lo scorso ottobre. L’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite discuterà la sua adozione in plenaria a dicembre, nell’ambito della sua 67a sessione. L’adozione formale di questa proposta di risoluzione è il risultato di una campagna internazionale per la messa al bando universale delle mutilazioni genitali femminili (MGF), guidata da una Coalizione in continua espansione, composta da Non c’è Pace Senza Giustizia, il Comitato Inter-Africano sulle pratiche tradizionali con effetto sulla salute delle donne e bambine, Euronet-FGM, e le Ong La Palabre, Manifesto 99 ed Equality Now. Dichiarazione di Alvilda Jablonko, coordinatrice del programma MGF di Non c’è Pace Senza Giustizia: “Non c’è Pace Senza Giustizia ed il Partito Radicale, insieme ai loro partner della Coalizione internazionale per la messa al bando universale delle mutilazioni genitali femminili, salutano l’adozione presso il terzo comitato dell’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite di un testo di Risoluzione sulle mutilazioni genitali femminili, che si staglia come pietra miliare della campagna per coinvolgere la leadership globale nella lotta contro le MGF in quanto violazione flagrante e su larga scala dei diritti umani fondamentali di donne e bambine. Il testo adottato oggi rappresenta un contributo essenziale verso il riconoscimento da parte dell’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite di questa violazione dei diritti umani come un problema mondiale che riguarda le vite quotidiane di donne e ragazze in tutto il mondo. In particolare, il progetto di risoluzione invita gli Stati a condannare « tutte le pratiche nefaste che colpiscono le donne e le ragazze, in particolare le mutilazioni genitali femminili, e di adottare tutte le misure necessarie, comprese misure normative per vietare tale pratica e proteggere le donne e le ragazze da questa forma di violenza, e per porre fine all’impunità ». Auspichiamo l’adozione a dicembre da parte dell’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite di questo strumento essenziale per fornire un appoggio inequivocabile alle azioni degli Stati ed attivisti in prima linea nella battaglia per contrastare e porre fine una volta per tutte a questa violazione dei diritti umani sia a livello nazionale che a livello internazionale”.

Campagna Ban FGM : Nel corso degli ultimi anni, i membri della Coalizione Ban FGM hanno collaborato in diverse iniziative per rafforzare la consapevolezza a livello internazionale sul bisogno di una Risoluzione dell’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite che metta al bando questa violazione dei diritti umani, raccogliendo il sostegno di attivisti dei diritti umani, organizzazioni femminili, membri del parlamento e rappresentanti governativi attraverso Africa ed Europa. Risultati tangibili che hanno dato uno slancio positivo verso una Risoluzione sono già stati raggiunti nel corso dello scorso anno. Un momento chiave in questo processo è stata la Decisione presa nel luglio 2011 da parte dei Capi di Stato e di Governo dell’Unione Africana per appoggiare una Risoluzione da Parte dell’Assemblea Generale. Il gruppo Africano alle Nazioni Unite ha preso lo spunto per rafforzare la volontà dei Capi di Stato presentando la Decisione durante la Commissione delle Nazioni Unite per la Condizione delle Donne (UN Commission on the Status of Women -CSW) in marzo 2012, raccomandando che questo tema delle Mutilazioni Genitali Femminili, finora discusso solo nel contesto del CSW, sia formalmente inserito dall’Assemblea Generale nelle tematiche riguardanti “il miglioramento delle condizioni delle donne”. Nel luglio 2012 l’ECOSOC (Consiglio per gli Affari Economici e Sociali delle Nazioni Unite) ha espresso il suo sostegno alla raccomandazione del CSW e richiesto che il tema del MGF sia aggiunto all’agenda della 67ª Assemblea Generale.

Lo rende noto l’ufficio stampa Radicali.