



AMPLIFYING VOICES ON ZERO TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION THROUGH SURVIVORS.

KAMPALA 06.02. 24] - As we commemorate the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) we are reminded of the abuse and gross violation that women and girls are subjected to globally. According to UNICEF's 2020 estimates in countries affected by FGM, 7 in 10 girls and women between 15 and 49 years of age believe that the practice should be discontinued. In the last 20 years, the proportion of girls and women who are against the practice in high-prevalence countries has doubled with over 80% women acknowledging that this harmful practice should end. UBOS' 2017 report revealed that in eastern Uganda the majority (95%) of women aged 15 – 49 living in FGM-practising sub-counties are in favour of ending the practice of FGM, with the lowest level of support for abandonment (90.6%) found among women 45 years of age and over.

Women and girls have been structurally silenced through years of conditioning by patriarchal systems that do not value women's choices. This year's theme, **“Her Voice. Her Future. Investing in Survivor Led Movements to End FGM”**, speaks to the shift in attitudes where women and girls are empowered to take charge of matters that affect them. Though various interventions have been made to combat the practice through advocacy and legislation, efforts need to be intensified to see to it that no woman or girl has to suffer this threat. For instance Uganda passed the FGM Act, 2010 which clearly criminalizes the performance, attempting, aiding and abetting all forms of the practice. According the UNFPA the number of girls at a risk of female genital mutilation is still overwhelming worldwide with a projected rise to 4.6 million in 2030. An estimation of \$2.75 billion is required to fully put this practice to a halt.

As the Women Probono Initiative, we join the global efforts to highly condemn Female Genital Mutilation because it is such a gross violation of human rights and a woman's bodily autonomy. The survivors of Female Genital Mutilation are not given chance to decide what happens to their bodies, as these bad and life changing decisions are usually external influence. The inhuman practice not only leads to death, but also has several dangerous effects such as chronic pain, infertility, severe infection among others.

This women led and survivor led campaign puts out a strong message to end this human rights violation from a grassroot level, as these women have an in-depth understanding of the challenges this harmful practice.

We call upon the general public, the Ugandan Government, religious leaders, ministries to join hands and voices to end this filthy practice. This practice affects us all as a community, therefore let's support the survivors of female genital mutilation with the prime aim of empowering, working hand in hand to ensure a safe environment for girls and women, where their rights are prioritized.

For more information about WPI's activities, please visit our website at www.womenprobono.org and our social media pages @womenprobono,wpi. Uganda et al or kindly contact us on our toll-free line +256 (0) 800-220645 OR email Maria directly at; maria@womenprobono.org and copy info@womenprobono.org

About WPI; The WPI is a reputable non-profit organization with a vision to create a just and equitable society where women and girls are free from all forms of discrimination and violence. We use various programs and initiatives to create lasting change and promote gender equality at all levels.