

Media Update

6 February 2023

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION New York, 6 February 2023

Female genital mutilation is an abhorrent violation of fundamental human rights that causes lifelong damage to the physical and mental health of women and girls. It is one of the most vicious manifestations of the patriarchy that permeates our world.

Some 4.2 million girls are at risk of being subjected to this act of gender-based violence during 2023 alone. We need urgent investments and action to reach the Sustainable Development Goals target of eliminating female genital mutilation by 2030.

Female genital mutilation is rooted in the same gender inequalities and complex social norms that limit women's participation and leadership and restrict their access to education and employment. This discrimination damages the whole of society, and we need urgent action by the whole of society to end it.

Men and boys – brothers, fathers, health workers, teachers, and traditional leaders – can be powerful allies in challenging and ending this scourge, as this year's theme makes clear.

I call on men and boys everywhere to join me in speaking out and stepping forward to end female genital mutilation, for the benefit of all.

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation, let's commit to social change and strong partnerships to put an end to female genital mutilation once and for all.
