

# Country: Sudan

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**Population:** 1.8 million

**Estimated prevalence among women aged 15-49:** 86%

## **Type practised:**

The most widely practiced form is **Type III** (commonly known as infibulation). Religious affiliation is one factor determining which type of FGC is practiced. Infibulation is most common among Muslim women, and **Type I** (also known as clitoridectomy) is mainly practised among Christians.

## **Legal status:**

There are no laws against FGC in Sudan, but it is the first country in Africa to have a record of legislation against the practice. The government of Sudan publicly opposes Type III.

## **History of FGC in Sudan:**

Over the past 50 years, attempts have been made to eradicate FGC. The Sudanese government has supported an intensive campaign against the practice, involving religious groups, the media and women's organisations. However, limited efforts have been made to educate health personnel and information about FGC in the school curricula.

A number of organisations have been involved in the fight against FGC in Sudan. The Sudan National Committee on Traditional Practices (SNCTP), funded largely by the government of the Netherlands, has focused on producing educational materials, training advocates and putting on public awareness seminars.

The Organisation for Eradication of Traditional Harmful Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children (ETHP) has worked on providing instruction and information for key groups involved in the practice of FGC, holding workshops, seminars, courses and discussions. They have held a series of public health sessions and have distributed educational material in rural areas across Sudan.

The Babiker Badri Organisation has also been involved in the anti-FGC campaign, with education programmes aimed at women and children.

The Mutawinat Group has conducted a study documenting the status of women who have not undergone FGC. As well as working to include information about the practice in school curricula.

Members of the medical profession have become more involved in the issue, information for the eradication of type III has been integrated into the curriculum for community health nurses at the Khartoum Nursing College, and it is hoped it will also be included in the curricula for medical students and student midwives.

## **Current efforts to abandon FGC:**

The National Council for Child Welfare, the Sudanese Journalists Union and UNICEF have been working together to end FGC in Sudan by 2018. Together they have organised events to mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGC, attended by Sudanese religious scholars, senior journalists and doctors in a show of solidarity towards the anti-FGC campaign in Sudan.

Concerted efforts by the government, NGOs and civil society are paying off, as evidence suggests that the prevalence rate among younger age groups is decreasing.

The 'Saleema' programme – a key multi-partner initiative celebrating girls who are not cut, has been particularly successful in Sudan up to now. *Saleema* is an Arabic word meaning 'complete, intact – whole, as

god created, untouched'. Through positive communication (and terminology) as well as non-formal education, the programme encourages Sudanese families to talk openly about taboo subjects such as FGC and to consider them in a human rights context. It promotes collective abandonment of the practice at the community level by stimulating new discussions about FGC – new both with regard to who talks to who ('talk pathways') and the specific issues communicated about ('talk content').

The Saleema campaign uses mass media to disseminate its message as widely as possible. Saleema trainers use booklets, posters and seminars to initiate discussions about FGC. More than 100 religious leaders are also involved in the initiative and having a profound effect.

In June 2012 some 640 Sudanese communities had embraced the Saleema initiative, each with a host of up to 30 active networks, key to disseminating the Saleema concept.

This approach has attracted interest from other East African countries (Eritrea, Kenya and Djibouti), and Sudanese advocates have made visits to Egypt to share their lessons.

### Ongoing challenges:

In 2008, female activists working to combat FGC and sexual violence were subjected to pressure from certain authorities, and NGOs working with similar issues have had problems getting registered with authorities.

A well-organised pro-FGC campaign has posed problems to anti-FGC efforts. They have accused the anti-FGC activists of having a hidden agenda, of being foreign agents or of displaying un-Islamic behaviour.

Many midwives continue to practice FGC for financial reasons. In order to encourage midwives to discontinue the practice, Khartoum State government initiated 500 job placements in the state's healthcare institutions.

### Practising Ethnic groups:

Arabs 70%

According to one report, all ethnic groups in Sudan practice some form of FGC.

### Languages:

**Arabic** (official)

**English** (official)

### Major religions:

Islam 97%

Christian 3%

### Resources:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095114>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/su.html>

<http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/rls/rep/crfgm/10110.htm>

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,USDOS,,SDN,,46d5787dc,0.html>

[http://www.landinfo.no/asset/764/1/764\\_1.pdf](http://www.landinfo.no/asset/764/1/764_1.pdf)

[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan\\_55692.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan_55692.html)

<http://www.panapress.com/Stakeholders-unite-to-end-Female-Genital-Mutilation-in-Sudan-in-2018--12-817647-25-lang2-index.html>

[http://www.unicef.org/sudan/protection\\_6092.html](http://www.unicef.org/sudan/protection_6092.html)

<https://www.unfpa.org/public/home/news/pid/11223>

<http://unmis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=511&ctl=Details&mid=2748&ItemID=12390>

<http://www.wluml.org/node/5575>