



NETWORK AGAINST FGM/C IN SOMALILAND

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STATEMENT AT INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, 2016 COMMEMORATION

Hargeisa, December 10, 2016, The Network Against Female Genital Mutilation in Somaliland (NAFIS Network), joins the rest of the world to commemorate the International Human Rights with an urgent call to our government, the policy makers, religious leaders, traditional leaders and all stakeholders to respond to the violence inflicted on girls and women through female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C) practice.

The FGM/C practice threatens the development of Somaliland because it violates the right of our daughters/ sisters to education. Education is the backbone of our development and economy. Education is a human right and is central to gender equality and women's empowerment. However, girls who underwent FGM/C continue to suffer its complications silently by not attending school regularly due to dysmenorrhea and recurrent urinary tract infection. Absenteeism impacts on girls' performance and some girls drop out of school due to severe complications, hence a challenge to girls' retention and completion of education. Girls and women have been robbed of their sexual and reproductive health right. Majority of FGM/C 96.7% is carried out when the girls are between ages of 2- 14years¹ which heightens the risk of infertility. The health and psychosocial complications experienced by women who underwent FGM/C has contributed a lot to cases of separation and divorce, yet majority of women depend on their male-counterpart economically.

¹ *NAFIS Assessment report, 2014*

NAFIS Network reiterates its call to:

1. Our legislators to protect the rights of Somaliland citizens and outlaw the FGM/C practice that has continued to inflict life-long harm and robbed on our daughters/ sisters/ mothers of their entitlements.
2. All line ministries (MoLSA, MoH,MOJ MORA, and MOE) to commit and collaborate on urgent need to address the FGM/C issue by putting in place the national Anti-FGM/C policy that will lead to effective interventions by the various stakeholders at all levels for total abandoning of FGM/C.