



February 6, 2026 - International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

On this **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, the National Council of Women of Canada stands in solidarity with women and girls around the world who have endured or are at risk of this deeply harmful violation of their human rights.

FGM is not a cultural tradition to be preserved—it is a violent act that causes lasting physical and psychological trauma. It constitutes gender-based violence and is now being identified as a form of Non-State Torture. In fact, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak declared that FGM is indeed a form of torture by non-State actors**.

When practiced or condoned by community members, family networks, or local authorities outside formal state power, it falls squarely within the global understanding of acts of torture committed by non-state actors.

Canada, along with UN Member States, has committed to the elimination of FGM by 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving this requires not only legal prohibitions but also education, survivor-centred support, and sustained community engagement that empowers women and girls to claim their full bodily autonomy and dignity.

The National Council of Women of Canada reaffirms its commitment to ending all forms of violence against women and girls, including FGM. We call upon governments, civil society, and international partners to intensify efforts toward prevention, accountability, and survivor support—ensuring every girl can grow up free from fear and harm.

Penny Rankin
NCWC President

To view a video featuring NCWC members **Linda McDonald** and **Jeanne Sarson** talking about Non State Torture please click on the following link: https://youtu.be/A50th51iyuM?si=7sB3_MK2wlFfF9ov

Please also note that they will be representing the NCWC at a Women Graduate-USA parallel event the NCWC is co-sponsoring next month in New York at CSW/70 on March 12th (12:30- 2 pm) on the 10th floor of the Church Center.

**To investigate further please refer to this 2008 UN Human Rights Council's Report issued by the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Manfred Nowak here: (*FGM beginning on page 16*)

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g08/101/61/pdf/g0810161.pdf>

To review our NCWC policies please check out our website.

2018 UPDATE 2: FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
2012:07 CRIMINALIZE TORTURE BY NON-STATE ACTORS