



[PRESS RELEASE]

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For immediate release**

AkiDwA welcomes new Female Genital Mutilation Bill 2010.

AKIDWA WELCOMES THE debate of new legislation entitled *Female Genital Mutilation Bill 2010* proposed by Senator Ivana Bacik in the Seanad on the 21 April 2010. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of gender based violence which affects an estimated 500,000 women and girls in Europe. According to the EU Parliament, approximately 180,000 girls living in the EU are at risk of FGM each year. In Ireland research indicates that there are over 2,585 women living here who have undergone FGM. However, there is no specific legislation to address FGM in Ireland.

Speaking at Seanad Eireann, Ivana Bacik said, "Our commitment to pass this legislation is an important and symbolic step in trying to end the oppression of women and girls worldwide."

Community activists speaking at the FGM Community Forum in Galway on 20 April 2010 stated: "We need legislation on FGM to protect women's human rights. It is worrying that FGM is not specifically dealt with within Irish law already."

Speaking after the debate, Salome Mbugua, AkiDwA National Director said, "In AkiDwA we have been working for many years on the issue of FGM. We want clear legislation to criminalise FGM in Ireland. We welcome the proposal for new legislation and commend Ivana Bacik on her work in this area. We look forward to the legal framework that will explicitly prohibit the practice of female genital mutilation from the Department of Health and Children."

[ENDS]

For more information please contact

Kelly Wattleworth

kelly@akidwa.ie

086 3888659 or 01 8148582