

Press Release

**First Irish Seminar to mark
International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation**

Tomorrow, Thursday 4th February, 2010

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is taking place across the world on the 6th February.

The National Plan of Action to Address Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Steering Committee will mark the day for the first time in Ireland and will feature a seminar, to take place on Thursday, 4th February 2010 from 10am to 1.30pm in the EPIC Centre on Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

The seminar will provide a forum for discussion on priorities in Ireland and overseas in relation to combating FGM. It will also highlight achievements and barriers related to legislation, implementation, human rights violations and community engagement. As an organising committee we hope the seminar will increase dialogue on FGM in Ireland and mobilise new supporters for those affected.

“FGM violates women and girl’s rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death. International solidarity is vital if zero tolerance of FGM is to be achieved. In addition practicing communities should be empowered and encouraged to be at the forefront of efforts to end FGM since they are key if we are to achieve our ultimate goals” said Salome Mbugua, National Director, AkiDwA.

The seminar will also feature the launch of a new EU Strategy, *ENDING FGM: A Strategy for the European Union Institutions*, which was part of the End FGM European Campaign led by Amnesty International. The report offers concrete recommendations for governments and EU institutions on five key dimensions which impact on the lives of young girls and women affected by FGM. Copies will be available at the seminar.

“Minister Harney is considering legislation to ban FGM in Ireland and we must see that move forward,” said Amnesty International Ireland Executive Director Colm O’Gorman.

“Refugee law needs to be clarified to ensure we fairly assess cases based on a well-founded fear of FGM. These are vital steps towards protecting the human rights of women and girls in Ireland. We also need to see supports for doctors, nurses and social workers dealing with women who have been subjected to FGM.”

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For more information contact:

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Photos will be available after event.

Notes to editor

Ireland's National Plan of Action to Address Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

was launched on the 25th November 2008 by;

AkiDwA	Amnesty International (Irish Section)
Barnardos	Cairde
Children's Rights Alliance	Christian Aid
Comhlamh	HSE
Integrating Ireland (Now: Integration and Social Inclusion Centre of Ireland)	Integration of African Children in Ireland
Irish Aid	Irish Family Planning Association
National Women's Council of Ireland	Refugee Information Service
Somali Community in Ireland	Somali Community Youth Group
UNICEF	Women's Health Council (Oct.08-Oct.2009)

Ireland's National Action Plan key goals:

1. Prevent the practice of FGM in Ireland.
2. Provide high quality, appropriate health care and support for women and girls who have undergone FGM.
3. Contribute to the worldwide campaign to end FGM.

A copy of Ireland's National Action Plan is available at <http://www.akidwa.ie/fgm.php>

Practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Briefing Paper covers:

1. Frequently Asked Questions about FGM
2. The Case for the Introduction of FGM-Specific Legislation in Ireland
3. International Developments 2008-2009
4. Update on Progress: National Steering Committee of Ireland's National Plan of Action to Address FGM

Document available at the event or via email: kieran@unicef.ie or sioban@akidwa.ie.

Attached: Seminar flyer

ENDING FGM: A Strategy for the European Union Institutions – developed by END FGM European Campaign, led by Amnesty International Ireland in partnership with NGOs across Europe. Strategy is available online at www.endfgm.eu from 4 February 2010