



*US End FGM/C Network Statement on Judge's Decision in Michigan Case*

The members of the US End FGM/C Network are deeply disappointed at US District Judge Bernard Friedman's [decision](#) to invalidate [the federal law banning Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting \(FGM/C\)](#). FGM/C is a serious human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence and child abuse. It has life-long health and psychological consequences and, despite common belief, is not rooted in any religion. Since its enactment in 1996, this law has demonstrated the US Government's commitment to the protection of girls and has been central to supporting a growing collaborative national and international movement to end FGM/C.

The opinion does not sanction the practice of FGM/C, which Judge Friedman characterizes as a "criminal assault" which cannot be differentiated from other "gender-motivated crimes of violence." While we disagree with his opinion that FGM/C can only be regulated locally, we encourage states to take action to end FGM/C:

"This decision shows the urgent need for state laws that not only criminalize FGM/C, but also secure funding for community outreach and education, and for local investigations and prosecutions of cutters doing business in the US. FGM/C also needs to be included in child protection and violence against women programs and responses" ~ *Dr. Ghada Khan, the US End FGM/C Network National Coordinator*

We stand with our US members, all FGM/C survivors, and allies across the globe to ensure that the rights of all girls and women are protected and that national laws are reflective of such commitments:

"The fact that this FGM/C law was dismissed sends the wrong message to the world. It emboldens people to decide what the female body should look like and what levels of pleasure women and girls are "allowed." We will not give up on this movement because we believe that change has to come. I cannot give up because I deal with the health ramifications of this practice"~ *Aissata M.B. Camara, There Is No Limit Foundation Co-Founder, the US End FGM/C Network Steering Committee Member*

"The ruling does not change our goal to create a world free of FGM/C. In the last few weeks, we have learned that rates of FGM/C have dropped significantly in Africa after decades of work. With continued efforts by a multisectoral arena, we believe that will happen amongst communities globally, including the US. There is still much to do around community education and outreach to protect girls and support survivors" ~ *Mariya Taher, Sahiyo Co-founder, the US End FGM/C Network Steering Committee Member*

*The US End FGM/C Network is a collaborative network of civil society organizations, foundations, activists, policymakers, researchers, health care providers and others committed to promoting the abandonment of FGM/C in the US and around the world*

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