



The Female Genital Mutilation Regulations In Indonesia: The International Law, Human Rights, and Islamic Law Perspectives

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Submission : December 31, 2024
Revision : February 24, 2025
Publication : March 02, 2025

Abstract

This study analyzes the practice of female genital mutilation in Indonesia from the perspective of international law, human rights, and Islamic law. Using normative law research methods, this study reviews laws, case studies, and conducts regulatory comparisons on national law against international law, human rights, and Islamic law. This study found that national regulations such as Minister of Health Regulation No. 1636 of 2010 and Minister of Health Regulation No. 6 of 2014 have contained provisions regarding the practice of female genital mutilation, but have not provided comprehensive protection for women in the implementation of this practice. Meanwhile, from the perspective of international law, CEDAW and CRC affirm that female genital mutilation is a form of gender-based discrimination and a violation of children's rights. This study concludes that efforts to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation require the role of the state in strengthening relevant regulations and increasing public awareness to provide better protection for women and girls.

Keywords: fgm; human rights; cedaw; indonesian law.



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis praktik mutilasi alat kelamin perempuan di Indonesia dari perspektif hukum internasional, hak asasi manusia, dan hukum islam. Menggunakan metode penelitian hukum normative, penelitian ini meninjau undang-undang, studi kasus, dan melakukan perbandingan-perbandingan regulasi pada hukum nasional terhadap hukum internasional, hak asasi manusia, dan hukum islam. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa peraturan nasional seperti Peraturan Menteri Kesehatan No. 1636 Tahun 2010 dan Peraturan Menteri Kesehatan No. 6 Tahun 2014 telah memuat ketentuan mengenai praktik mutilasi alat kelamin perempuan, tetapi belum memberikan perlindungan yang komprehensif bagi Perempuan dalam pelaksanaan praktik ini. Sementara itu, dari perspektif hukum internasional, CEDAW dan CRC menegaskan bahwa mutilasi alat kelamin perempuan merupakan bentuk diskriminasi berbasis gender dan pelanggaran hak anak. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa upaya untuk menghilangkan praktek mutilasi alat kelamin perempuan membutuhkan peran negara dalam memperkuat peraturan-peraturan terkait dan meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat guna memberikan perlindungan yang lebih baik bagi perempuan dan anak-anak perempuan.

Kata Kunci: *fgm; ham; cedaw; hukum indonesia.*

A. Introduction

FGM or Female Genital Mutilation is a traditional practice that involves cutting, altering, or removing part or all of a woman's genitals without a medical reasoning.¹ FGM has been widely recognized as a form of human rights violation, particularly women's rights.²

¹ Feni Sulistyawati and Abdul Hakim, "Sunat Perempuan Di Indonesia: Potret Terhadap Praktik FGM," *Jurnal Hawa: Studi Pengarus Utamaan Gender Dan Anak* 4, no. 1 (2022): 31–38.

² Yulita Dwi Pratiwi, "Transplantation of Regulation of The Prohibition FGM Through a Comparison Study of Indonesian Law with Egypt," *Jurnal HAM* 13 (2022): 45.

Based on customary law of Banjar community, female circumcision is a symbol of self-purification. With the presence of scratches on the genitals that bleed, it means that it must be remembered that humans are dirty, therefore they must always be purified. With female circumcision, it is symbolized that human purification has occurred.³ As a practice that has no medical benefits, FGM carries serious health impacts, including extreme pain, psychological trauma, risk of infection, as well as complications in pregnancy and childbirth.⁴ This makes FGM an issue that falls within the scope of international human rights law, encompassing violations of the rights to health, freedom from violence, and bodily integrity.

The practice of FGM persists in various communities around the world, including in Indonesia, because it is influenced by cultural, traditional, and religious beliefs' factors.⁵ While some groups consider FGM to be part of cultural heritage or a religious

³ Tutung Nurdiana, "Sunat Perempuan Pada Masyarakat Banjar Di Kota Banjarmasin," *Komunitas* 2, no. 2 (2010).

⁴ Endang Susilowati, "Bab 4 Kesehatan Reproduksi Remaja," *Mendalami Kesehatan Remaja: Kunci Untuk Hidup Berkualitas*, n.d., 55.

⁵ Nurzahrah Nurzahrah, "Analisis Penggunaan Alat Sirkumsisi Terhadap Anak Perempuan Di Desa Ujong Reuba Kecamatan Meurah Mulia Kabupaten Aceh Utaratahun 2019" (Institut Kesehatan Helvetia Medan, 2021).

obligation, international human rights law affirms that all women deserve to be protected from practices that are detrimental to their physical or mental health. This perspective is in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations in 1979. CEDAW emphasizes that any form of gender-based violence, including FGM, is a form of discrimination that must be eliminated.⁶ The practice of FGM is understood and treated differently across various legal, religious, and cultural frameworks.

From an Islamic legal perspective, it is not universally mandated and is often seen as a cultural practice rather than a religious duty. International law, however, strongly condemns FGM, considering it as a violation of human rights. National legal systems have increasingly criminalized FGM in response to growing awareness of its harmful effects on women and children's health. On the other hand, in some traditional cultural settings, the practice persists despite its harm, with non-medical practitioners often involved. The major point of

⁶ Yulita Dwi Pratiwi, "Transplantasi Pengaturan Larangan Praktik Female Genital Mutilation Melalui Studi Perbandingan Indonesia Dengan Mesir," *Jurnal HAM* 13, no. 1 (2022): 45–64.

contention lies in the practice itself—what constitutes "FGM" in different contexts. In some places, FGM may be viewed as a necessary cultural or religious practice (e.g., as a form of female circumcision), while in others, it is regarded as a form of violence and mutilation. The divergence of definitions and practices—whether it is carried out for religious, cultural, or even medical reasons—creates tension between perspectives. Ultimately, the need for education, legal reform, and protection against harmful practices is universally acknowledged as essential to the health and well-being of individuals at risk of FGM.

Meanwhile, in the context of Human Rights, FGM violates the principle of non-derogable rights. These rights cannot be limited or violated under any circumstances, including during a national emergency. FGM threatens several important basic rights, such as the right to physical integrity (which protects the body from mutilation), the right to health (with adverse physical and psychological impacts), and the right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Therefore, FGM is considered a serious violation of human rights that cannot be justified under any circumstances.

At the regional level, the Maputo Protocol of the African Union became a landmark document calling for the elimination of FGM. The protocol highlights that FGM not only impacts women's health, but also violates women's rights to dignity, protection, and equality. As a country that has ratified CEDAW through Law No. 7/1984, Indonesia has a legal obligation to ensure that women are free from all forms of discrimination and violence, including the practice of FGM.⁷

In the context of national law, Indonesia has regulated the protection of women's rights through several laws, such as Article 4 of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights affirms that there are fundamental rights that cannot be reduced under any circumstances and by anyone. These rights include the right to life, the right not to be tortured, freedom of person, thought, and conscience, the right to religion, the right not to be enslaved, the right to be recognized as a person, equality before the law, and the right not to be prosecuted under retroactive laws. This provision affirms that these rights are absolute and must be respected in all situations.

⁷ Aulia Nabila and Yunita Desmawati, "Pembaruan Hukum Perlindungan Hak Atas Kesehatan Reproduksi Perempuan Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan* 52, no. 1 (2022): 14–38.

In addition, Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence is also the legal basis to crack down on the practice of FGM as a form of physical violence that impacts women's health and safety. Articles 5 to 7 regulate the prohibition of domestic violence, which includes physical, psychological, sexual violence, and domestic neglect. Physical violence involves acts that cause pain or serious injury, while psychological violence can cause fear, loss of self-confidence, or severe mental suffering.

These articles aim to protect family members from acts that can damage their physical or emotional well-being. However, despite regulations protecting women's rights, the implementation of these laws still faces major challenges, especially in rural areas and traditional communities that continue to practice FGM in the name of tradition or religion.⁸ The majority of Indonesian people are Muslims. Therefore, many people automatically practice female circumcision because in Islamic law it is recommended to perform circumcision for both men and women. Historically, Islam is one of the oldest religions in

⁸ Ajriya Putri Tsaniya, "Analisis Kegagalan Upaya UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme On Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change Dalam Mendorong Penegakan Hukum FGM Di Mesir Pada Tahun 2018-2021" (Program Studi Ilmu Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu ..., n.d.).

Indonesia, so it is not surprising that some actions regulated in Islamic law have become a culture in Indonesian society.

In addition, the positive law in Indonesia, apart from adopting from the Dutch rules, not a few also adopted from Islamic law such as regulations on marriage, so it is not surprising that circumcision activities for both men and women have become a culture in Indonesian society. Or even in some areas that make Islamic law as their customary law. However, it is also possible that the motive for the existence of female circumcision is based on pure cultural traditions with the reason as a form of purification which is part of the formation of women's identity.⁹ In 2008, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued Fatwa No. 9A/2008 stating that female circumcision is part of Islamic teachings, but must be done in a way that is not harmful. This fatwa does not prohibit circumcision completely, but rather limits its implementation to be carried out by competent medical personnel with a safe approach. This is contrary to the international recommendations that call for the total elimination of FGM practices.

⁹ Umi Salamah et al., "Pelaksanaan Sunat Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam Dan Kesehatan," 2025.

Several previous studies have discussed the practice of FGM), such as Yulita Dwi Pratiwi's research entitled "*Human Rights Violations against Female Genital Mutilation Practices*,"¹⁰ and a journal article by Rahayu entitled "*Juridical Study of FGM in Human Rights Perspective (Study of Female Genital Mutilation Practices in Indonesia)*."¹¹ Both studies generally highlight the prohibition of FGM from the perspective of Human Rights and international law, especially based on CEDAW, which has been ratified by Indonesia.

However, there are aspects of Islamic law and customary law that in some cases still encourage the practice of female circumcision, thus causing inconsistencies in FGM regulations in Indonesia. Therefore, this study offers novelty by discussing these inconsistencies in these regulations through an in-depth review, especially from the perspective of international law and Islamic law, as well as their impact on the implementation of FGM practices in the society. Although

¹⁰ Yulita Dwi Pratiwi, "Transplantation of Regulation of The Prohibition FGM Through a Comparison Study of Indonesian Law with Egypt," *Jurnal HAM* 13 (2022): 45.

¹¹ Marlinda Oktavia Erwanti and Elfia Farida Rahayu, "Kajian Yuridis FGM Dalam Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia (Studi Terhadap Praktik Female Genital Mutilation Di Indonesia)," *Diponegoro Law Journal* 1, no. 4 (2012).

the government has accepted various recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism to eliminate FGM, the practice continues in some parts of Indonesia. This reflects the need for a more comprehensive approach to address this issue. This approach should include educating the public about the dangers of FGM, changing cultural norms, and strengthening law enforcement by the principles of CEDAW and international human rights.

The problem formulations that this study will unfold in the discussion section are:

1. What is the form of regulations inconsistencies related to FGM in Indonesia from the perspective of international law, human rights, and Islamic law?; and
2. How is the practice of FGM in Indonesia viewed from the perspective of international law, especially on the protection of human rights?

This research uses a normative juridical approach where a literature review is conducted by utilizing the primary and secondary legal materials.¹² This normative legal research aims to review data, find legal principles,

¹² Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum: Edisi Revisi* (Prenada Media, 2017).

and apply general principles.¹³ in the field of human rights, particularly about the issue of FGM.

This method allows to analyze, test, and apply general human rights principles to highlight the issue of FGM. This research utilizes three approaches, namely:

1. Statute Approach: The research was conducted by examining the regulations in the legislation.¹⁴ related to the issue of FGM and human rights. This approach is important to assess how national and international regulations govern the practice of FGM and how the law protects the rights of individuals, especially women.
2. Case Approach: This method is done by studying cases¹⁵ This approach provides an empirical view of the application of human rights law in dealing with FGM cases, so as to strengthen the research argument related to the legal issues under study. This approach provides an empirical view of the application of human rights law in dealing with

¹³ Irwansyah, "Penelitian Hukum: Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel," *Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media* 8 (2020).

¹⁴ I BUKU-BUKU, "Amiruddin Dan H. Zainal Asikin., Pengantar Metode Penelitian Hukum," n.d.

¹⁵ Zainuddin Ali, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Sinar Grafika, 2021).

FGM cases, so as to strengthen the research arguments related to the legal issues being studied.

3. **Comparative Approach:** Through this method, the researcher compares the handling of FGM cases in different countries.¹⁶ This approach aims to understand the differences and similarities of legal policies taken by countries in relation to the practice of FGM and human rights. This approach aims to understand the differences and similarities in legal policies taken by countries regarding the practice of FGM and human rights.

This research is based on a literature study, where legal materials are obtained from applicable human rights norms and related literature sources, both nationally and internationally. The author uses an in-depth analytical approach to examine the application of human rights law in addressing the issue of FGM and solving problems related to the protection of human rights for women from the practice of FGM.

B. Discussion

¹⁶ Sulaiman Tripa, *Diskursus Metode Dalam Penelitian Hukum* (Bandar Publishing, 2019).

1. The Inconsistency of Regulations on FGM in Indonesia from the Perspective of International Law, Human Rights, and Islamic Law

Law is born from society and grows and lives within society itself.¹⁷ Legal reform is closely related to the dynamics of society because the law does not only function as a regulatory tool, but also as a reflection of the values and aspirations of the society it regulates. An effective legal system must be able to adapt to social, cultural, and economic changes in order to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of society. This becomes even more important when faced with sensitive issues that are deeply embedded in cultural traditions and norms, such as the practice of FGM.

In Indonesia, this issue has its complexities as it involves health, tradition, religion, and human rights dimensions. The practice of FGM, despite being a global concern in the context of human rights, remains part of the cultural norms of some communities. This shows how the law must work

¹⁷ Syofyan Hadi, "Hukum Positif Dan the Living Law (Eksistensi Dan Keberlakuannya Dalam Masyarakat)," *DiH: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 2018.

in the context of diverse societies while facing global challenges in protecting human rights.¹⁸

The practice of female circumcision in Indonesia is part of a long-standing tradition, with much of it based on religious beliefs or customs.¹⁹ Indonesian society, which is rich in tradition and cultural diversity, has various views regarding the practice of FGM. While some religious and cultural groups view the practice as an obligation or part of religious teachings, others view it as a way to prevent FGM,²⁰ Many others see FGM as a violation of women's rights, especially the right to health and bodily integrity.

In 2006, the Indonesian Ministry of Health issued a Circular Letter to the Director General of Health Development of the Ministry of Health Number HK 00.07.1.31047a prohibiting medical

¹⁸ Nabila Riani and Andi Aina Ilmih, "Membangun Tembok Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Di Era Kejahatan Lintas Negara," *ALADALAH: Jurnal Politik, Sosial, Hukum Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 4 (2024): 25-35.

¹⁹ Neny Heryani, Herinawati, and Diniyati, "Tradisi Dan Persepsi Tentang Sunat Perempuan Di Desa Sukamaju Kabupaten Muaro Jambi," *Jambura Journal of Health Sciences and Research* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1-11.

²⁰ Sulistyawati and Hakim, "Sunat Perempuan Di Indonesia: Potret Terhadap Praktik FGM."

personnel from performing female circumcision. This circular was based on the assessment that female circumcision provides no medical benefit and is potentially detrimental to women's health.²¹ However, since the circular does not have the binding force of a law, many people have challenged the ban, especially those who still view the practice as a religious obligation.²² This resistance led to the implementation of the ban being short-lived, and the practice of FGM continued in some communities.

As part of the law in Indonesia, Islamic law also provides many explanations about female circumcision, because after all, the term circumcision is more identified with Islam, which is one of the subjects that advocates, so it would be better if the term circumcision is returned to the definition according to Islamic law. Circumcision in Islamic Law is called khitan, which etymologically means cutting. Some scholars call it a'dzar for male

²¹ Inda Lestari Ibrahim, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Perempuan Atas Praktik Sunat Ditinjau Dari Prespektif Hak Asasi Manusia," *Lex Administratum* 12, no. 4 (2024).

²² Idham Indraputra, "Tinjauan Terhadap Potensi Kriminalisasi Petugas Kesehatan Atas Ketidakpastian Kebijakan Medikalisasi Sunat Perempuan," *Action Research Literate* 8, no. 1 (2024): 1–8.

circumcision and khafadl or khifadl for female circumcision.²³ Sayyid Sabiq in Fiqh Sunnah terminologically defines khitan as “cutting the skin covering the *hasyafah* (head of the penis) so that it does not store dirt and makes it easier to clean after urinating and is intended not to reduce the pleasure of sexual intercourse. This definition is attributed to male circumcision. Female circumcision, on the other hand, involves cutting off the uppermost part (clitoris) of the vagina. Khitan is an ancient tradition”,²⁴

In the Quran there is no specific verse that explains the law of female circumcision. Whereas in one of the hadiths of the Prophet there is a saying of the Prophet which means, “circumcision is recommended for men and is a glory for women” (HR. Ahmad).²⁵ The four imams of the madzhab (*madzahibul arba'ah*) also gave different fatwas regarding female circumcision. According to Imam Maliki and Hanafi, circumcision is a *sunnah*

²³ Muhammad Hilal Mubarak, Shuhufi Shuhufi, and Misbahuddin Misbahuddin, “Kedudukan Khitan Perempuan Perspektif Hukum Islam,” *Media Hukum Indonesia* 2, no. 3 (2024): 515–21, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12579487>.

²⁴ Hilal Mubarak, Shuhufi, and Misbahuddin.

²⁵ Hilal Mubarak, Shuhufi, and Misbahuddin.

muakkadah for men and a glory for women and it is recommended not to cut excessively, meaning in cutting the skin of the vaginal lips so that she can still feel maximum sexual pleasure. Imam Syafii is of the opinion that circumcision is obligatory for both men and women, while Imam Hanbali is of the opinion that it is obligatory for men and a glory for women.²⁶ And there are many more explanations of scholars about circumcision, especially female circumcision. Seeing the lack of explanation in the Qur'an and the weakness of the Prophet's hadith, it is natural that scholars differ in opinion. It can be concluded that female circumcision does not absolutely have to be done in the perspective of Islamic law, but it is returned to each person which is believed to be correct as long as the circumcision is not defined as excessive and accompanied by objective reasons such as considerations about compliance with religious norms, health, and good and correct procedures.

In 2008, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued Fatwa No. 9A of 2008 supporting the

²⁶ Hilal Mubarak, Shuhufi, and Misbahuddin.

practice of female circumcision in the context of Islam. MUI considers that the practice of female circumcision is part of Islamic teachings which is recommended as an act of worship.²⁷ However, this fatwa is only an appeal and does not have binding legal force. It reflects a normative religious view rather than providing a concrete legal solution to the problem. This shows the tension between religious norms, human rights, and the application of law that the state has to deal with in regulating this practice. The MUI fatwa briefly explains that female circumcision in Islamic law is permissible, neither obligatory nor prohibited. In addition, the fatwa prohibits the prohibition of female circumcision because it is contrary to religious norms that allow female circumcision and recommends the government to make the fatwa a reference in establishing regulations on female circumcision.

The MUI fatwa uses the basis of several book references that are used as a guide for

²⁷ Faiz Izuddin Masykur and Fadhliah Mubakkirah, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Khitan Bagi Perempuan (Studi Komparasi Antara Ulama Klasik Dan Ulama Kontemporer)," *Comparativa: Jurnal Ilmiah Perbandingan Mazhab Dan Hukum* 3, no. 2 (2022): 139–60.

Indonesian *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* scholars, namely I'anatut Thalibin juz IV page 198 authored by Sayyid Abu Bakar Syatho which means, "What is required in circumcising women is to cut the part that must be circumcised. It is preferable in circumcising women to scratch just a little of the part that should be circumcised, based on the hadith narrated by Abu Daud and others: that the apostle of Allah SAW said to the female circumciser, *circumcise with a little and do not overdo it. Female circumcision is more enjoyable for women and more enjoyable for husbands*; in the sense of increasing the pleasure of intercourse. In one narration, it brightens the face, *that is, there is more aura with the flow of facial water and blood.*"

The MUI fatwa also quotes from the book *Al-Fiqhul Islam Wa Adillatuhu* authored by a contemporary scholar Wahbah Az-Zuhaili which states that means, "Female circumcision is to cut as little as possible of the skin located at the top of the *farj*. It is recommended not to overdo it, meaning that it is not permissible to cut off the comb located at the very top of the *farj*, in order to achieve the perfection of pleasure during intercourse." It can be

concluded that in the perspective of Islamic law, female circumcision is more inclined to sunnah (recommended) or mubah (permissible) as long as the practice is truly in accordance with sharia, so that it does not cause fatal negative consequences. The point of emphasis is that if Islamic law as part of the legislation is as much as possible not to be deviated from by the legislation itself, so as not to become a controversial regulation.

In 2010, the Ministry of Health issued Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes) No. 1636/2010 which regulates the procedure for performing female circumcision.²⁸ This Permenkes seeks to provide guidelines for medical personnel in performing female circumcision by considering religious and cultural aspects while trying to minimize the risk of injury to the female genital organs. ²⁹ However, while the MOH sought to protect women, pressure from the international community for Indonesia to abolish the practice of

²⁸ Aisyatul Azizah, "Status Hukum Khitan Perempuan (Perdebatan Pandangan Ulama Dan Permenkes RI No. 1636/MENKES/PER/XI/2010)," *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 19, no. 2 (2020): 173–86.

²⁹ Titik Kuntari, *Khitan: Memahami Kebenaran Islam Melalui Ilmu Kedokteran Modern* (Uiipress, 2023).

FGM, which is considered detrimental to women's health, led the Indonesian government to revoke the regulation in 2014 through MOH Regulation No. 6/2014.

The revocation of the Minister of Health Regulation reflects the increasing international pressure on the practice of FGM. One of the instruments that exerts this pressure is the CEDAW which Indonesia has ratified through Law Number 7 of 1984 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women).³⁰ CEDAW emphasizes that state parties are obliged to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including discrimination in terms of health.³¹ CEDAW also suggested that Indonesia make a more concrete action plan to eliminate FGM, as stated in CEDAW's Concluding Observation

³⁰ Laporan Independen and Lembaga Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, "25 Tahun Pelaksanaan Kesepakatan Global Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA+ 25) Di Indonesia," 2019.

³¹ Chessyca Veranda and Yulianto Achmad, "Penegakan Nilai-Nilai CEDAW Dalam Kebijakan Taliban Terhadap Perempuan Afghanistan Tahun 2021-2023," *DIVERSI: Jurnal Hukum* 10, no. 1 (2024): 64–97.

in 2007 and 2012. In addition, the UN Human Rights Commission also issued a recommendation during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session in 2012 asking Indonesia to revoke Permenkes No. 1636 on female circumcision.³² This push shows that FGM has become a global concern, as the practice is considered a violation of women's basic rights, particularly the right to health and bodily integrity under Article 11 Letter (f) of CEDAW.

The international community not only provides recommendations, but also provides concrete examples of how other countries regulate FGM. For example, in Australia, the state of New South Wales passed the Crimes Amendment Bill 2014, which introduced harsher penalties for anyone involved in the practice of FGM,³³ including taking a person out of the country to perform this practice. These laws reflect how seriously other countries are taking the practice of FGM, which is

³² Pratiwi, "Transplantation of Regulation of The Prohibition FGM Through a Comparison Study of Indonesian Law with Egypt."

³³ Yasmin Bootwala, "Exploring Opposition to Ritual Female Genital Cutting since the First US Federal Prosecution: The 2017 Detroit Case," *International Journal of Impotence Research* 35, no. 3 (2023): 179–86.

considered a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation.

In the Indonesian context, these strong international efforts have not been fully matched by an adequate legal approach domestically. While Indonesia already has several regulations related to the practice of FGM, such as the Ministry of Health's Circular Letter and MUI's Fatwa, the existing laws are still not enough to provide adequate legal protection for women. As a country that has ratified CEDAW and accepted various international recommendations, Indonesia must commit to taking stricter measures to protect women from the practice of FGM.³⁴

The importance of a comprehensive legal approach that is in line with international human rights developments is increasingly being felt.³⁵ Law No. 12/2011 on the Establishment of Legislation emphasizes that every legislation must

³⁴ Nindya Miesye Agita Pasaribu and Kekhususan Pencegahan D A N Penanggulangan, "Perkembangan Konsep Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Indonesia," *Universitas Indonesia*, 2014.

³⁵ Muhammad Japar, Abdul Haris Semendawai, and Muhammad Fahrudin, "Hukum Kesehatan Ditinjau Dari Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia," *Jurnal Interpretasi Hukum* 5, no. 1 (2024): 952–61.

be based on authority and have binding legal force. In this case, Indonesia needs to formulate clearer and firmer regulations to regulate the practice of female circumcision such as the establishment of laws and implementing regulations at relevant institutions on the protection of women. The ideal regulation not only regulates safe implementation procedures, but also needs to set clear limits to prevent the practice of FGM that can damage women's genital organs.

The regulation must ensure that women's health rights are protected, without neglecting freedom of religion and belief. In other words, Indonesia needs a law that not only prohibits the practice of FGM, but also provides clear and comprehensive guidelines on how the practice of female circumcision should be carried out if it cannot be completely abolished. This approach should involve all aspects, medical, cultural and religious, so that the practice of female circumcision that is detrimental to health can be prevented.

In addition, there is a need to socialize with the community about the dangers of FGM, both in

terms of health and human rights. The community should be given a broader understanding of the adverse effects of this practice, as well as the importance of protecting women's rights, including the right to health and bodily integrity. The government also needs to provide medical facilities that can address the negative impacts of FGM for women who have undergone the practice, so that they can receive the necessary treatment and recovery.

Overall, although Indonesia faces great challenges in eliminating the practice of FGM linked to tradition and religion, it is important for the state to uphold human rights and health principles in the formation of legal policies. Indonesia needs to continue to strive to strike a balance between respect for culture and religion and protection of women's human rights, and commit to responding to international pressure to eliminate the harmful practice of FGM. A comprehensive approach, based on human rights and health, and accompanied by deep social change, will be key in addressing this issue and

creating a safer and healthier environment for women in Indonesia.

2. The practice of FGM in Indonesia is viewed from the perspective of international law, especially in relation to the protection of human rights

FGM is the practice of cutting or removing part or all of the external parts of the female genitalia, often based on tradition or culture. The procedure involves the removal of sensitive parts of the genitals, such as the clitoris, labia minora, and labia majora, which play an important role in reproductive and sexual functions. Although the practice is carried out in some communities for non-medical reasons, FGM has serious physical and psychological health impacts and is considered a human rights violation. The World Health Organization (WHO) and many other health organizations have highlighted the dangers of FGM and the importance of eliminating the practice globally.

The WHO classifies FGM into four main types based on the part of the genitals removed or modified:

1. **Type I (Clitoridectomy):** Partial or complete removal of the clitoris and/or foreskin. This type is divided into two subtypes: Ia, removal of only the clitoral hood, and Ib, removal of the clitoris along with the foreskin;
2. **Type II (Excision):** Partial or complete removal of the clitoris and labia minora, with or without removal of the labia majora. Subtypes include IIa (removal of the labia minora), IIb (removal of the clitoris and labia minora), and IIc (removal of the clitoris, labia minora, and labia majora);
3. **Type III (Infibulation):** Narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a closing seal by fusing the tissues of the labia minora or labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris. The subtypes are IIIa (closure with labia minora) and IIIb (closure with labia majora).
4. **Type IV:** Unclassified procedures involving puncture, incision, or cauterization of the

genital area without any specific structures being removed.

FGM practices cause significant medical impacts. In the short term, complications can include extreme pain, heavy bleeding, infections such as tetanus and sepsis, and the risk of shock due to trauma. Meanwhile, long-term impacts include sexual dysfunction, complications of childbirth that threaten the safety of the mother and baby, and psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Women who undergo FGM can also experience chronic pain and urinary tract problems, which further worsen their quality of life. Therefore, collaborative steps are needed to raise awareness, protect women, and eliminate the practice of FGM through legal approaches, education, and community empowerment.

FGM or better known in Indonesia as female circumcision, is an act that involves the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia without a valid medical reason, and is usually performed on girls, although it can also be

performed on adults.³⁶ According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2012, FGM is a practice that threatens the physical and psychological health of women,³⁷ and therefore, WHO and other international bodies condemn this practice as a violation of human rights.

The practice of FGM itself is not limited to a particular religion or culture, but is more related to a patriarchal value system that places women in a subordinate position.³⁸ The practice of FGM is a complex issue that transcends specific religious or cultural boundaries and is deeply entrenched in a patriarchal value system. At its core, FGM reflects societal structures that place women in subordinate positions, reinforcing the notion that their bodies, choices, and lives must be controlled to align with community-defined standards of

³⁶ Puspita Ceassarini Ana Ningtyas and Elisabeth Septin Puspoayu, "Perbandingan Hukum Terkait Dengan Female Genital Mutilation Antara Indonesia, Guinea, Dan Mesir Menurut Hak Asasi Manusia Internasional," *Novum: Jurnal Hukum*, 2022, 111–20.

³⁷ Rendi Ahmed Setiawan, "Khitan Wanita Dalam Pandangan World Health Organization (WHO) Dan Ormas Islam Di Indonesia" (Jakarta: Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, n.d.).

³⁸ Yanuarius You, *Patriarki, Ketidakadilan Gender, Dan Kekerasan Atas Perempuan: Model Laki-Laki Baru Masyarakat Hubula Suku Dani* (Nusamedia, 2021).

purity and honor. This system perpetuates harmful gender roles and restricts women's autonomy, often under the guise of tradition or morality.

FGM is frequently justified by the belief that it preserves a woman's chastity, reduces her sexual desire, and thereby ensures her loyalty to her family and future husband. These narratives position women not as individuals with rights and agency but as bearers of family honor, whose value is intrinsically tied to their adherence to patriarchal expectations. As a result, many women and girls are subjected to this painful and invasive procedure, often without their informed consent or understanding of its implications.

It is important to note that the gender discrimination underlying FGM practices not only leads to violations of individual rights, but also exacerbates gender inequality in society. This patriarchal view views women as inferior to men, and women's rights and autonomy are often denied. This not only affects women's lives in the private sphere but also exacerbates inequalities in

the social, political and economic spheres.³⁹ FGM is often done to restrain women in order to maintain family honor or comply with certain religious demands, but the long-term impacts are very detrimental to women's physical, psychological, and social health. Such gender discrimination has become a major issue recognized in various international conventions, such as the CEDAW.

CEDAW is an international instrument that affirms that discrimination against women in any form, including the practice of FGM, is a violation of their fundamental rights. Article 1 of CEDAW explicitly states that discrimination against women includes any restriction or exclusion that prevents women from enjoying their basic rights, including the right to health, safety, and dignity.⁴⁰

The practice of FGM also violates the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which focuses on protecting children from harmful traditional practices. Article 24(3) of the

³⁹ Djilzaran Nurul Suhada, "Feminisme Dalam Dinamika Perjuangan Gender Di Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Sociology, Education, and Development* 3, no. 1 (2021): 15–27.

⁴⁰ M N I Sari, "Aspek Hukum Internasional Pemenuhan Hak Menerima Upah Yang Sama Terhadap Pekerja Perempuan Dan Implementasinya Di Indonesia," 2019.

CRC requires states parties to eliminate practices that are detrimental to the health of children, including FGM.⁴¹ Given that FGM is often carried out on girls who are not yet able to defend or decide for themselves about their bodies, this is a clear violation of their rights to protection and health.

The physical effects of FGM are profoundly harmful, posing significant risks to a woman's health both immediately after the procedure and throughout her life. The act itself is often performed in non-sterile environments, using unclean or rudimentary tools such as razors, broken glass, or knives, and frequently without any form of anesthesia. This results in excruciating pain that can leave women in a state of physical shock. For many, the pain is so severe that it leads to fainting or, in extreme cases, life-threatening complications.

One of the most immediate dangers of FGM is severe bleeding, which can result from the cutting or removal of sensitive and vascular tissue.

⁴¹ Dian Fajrina Rahmiarti, "Implementasi Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Dalam Isu Kekerasan Seksual Di Indonesia" (Universitas Fajar, 2018).

The uncontrolled loss of blood can lead to hypovolemic shock, a condition where the body cannot circulate sufficient blood, putting the individual's life at risk. Infections such as tetanus or sepsis are also common due to the use of contaminated tools and the lack of proper wound care. These infections can spread quickly through the body, further increasing the risk of mortality if not treated promptly. In some cases, women and girls have died shortly after the procedure from untreated infection or hemorrhage,⁴² and the possibility of death from untreated infection or bleeding are some of the immediate effects that can occur after the procedure.

Although some types of FGM are considered "milder," such as type I circumcision, which removes only a small portion of the clitoris, the procedure can still cause serious physical complications, especially if performed with unhygienic instruments or by untrained medical personnel.⁴³

⁴² Nurzahrah, "Analisis Penggunaan Alat Sirkumsisi Terhadap Anak Perempuan Di Desa Ujong Reuba Kecamatan Meurah Mulia Kabupaten Aceh Utaratahun 2019."

⁴³ Susilowati, "Bab 4 Kesehatan Reproduksi Remaja."

The long-term effects of FGM can be even more devastating. Many women who undergo FGM experience chronic pain in their genital area, which can persist for years after the procedure. Pelvic infections, urinary tract infections, and reproductive system disorders are common in women who have undergone the procedure.

In addition, FGM can also cause menstrual complications, such as severe pain or the inability to menstruate smoothly. Infibulation, which is the most extreme type of FGM (type III),⁴⁴ can cause a buildup of menstrual blood that cannot be released due to the abnormally closed vaginal canal, which then poses a risk of infection. In some cases, this procedure can also cause infertility or other reproductive health problems that can affect a woman's ability to have children. In addition to its devastating physical consequences, FGM inflicts profound psychological trauma on women and girls who undergo the procedure. The experience often leaves a lasting emotional scar, as many report feelings of intense fear, anxiety, and

⁴⁴ Nurul Hidayatun Jalilah And Ruly Prapitasari, *Kesehatan Reproduksi Dan Keluarga Berencana* (Penerbit Adab, 2021).

hopelessness both during and after the procedure. The forced nature of FGM, coupled with the physical pain and sense of violation, can create an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and loss of control over one's body, which may persist long after the physical wounds have healed.⁴⁵ One of the most serious psychological outcomes of FGM is the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Women who have undergone FGM may relive the traumatic event through intrusive memories, flashbacks, or nightmares. The circumstances under which FGM is often performed such as being restrained against one's will, the use of rudimentary tools, and the absence of anesthesia heighten the psychological impact. For many, these memories are compounded by the cultural and familial pressures that normalize the procedure, making it difficult for survivors to process or confront their trauma openly.⁴⁶

It is important to understand that FGM is not only a violation of women's physical and

⁴⁵ Hajeng Wulandari, *Kekerasan & Penelantaran Pada Anak* (Universitas Brawijaya Press, 2021).

⁴⁶ Abu Huraerah, *Kekerasan Terhadap Anak (Revisi)* (Nuansa Cendekia, 2024).

psychological rights, but also a violation of their overall human rights. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 6 guarantees the right to life which shall not be arbitrarily deprived.⁴⁷

In this context, the risk of death resulting from FGM is a violation of that right to life. Article 7 of the ICCPR also prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and FGM meets this criterion because it is often carried out without the woman's consent and has devastating physical and mental consequences. The legal act also violates the provisions of Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereinafter simply referred to as CAT) which has been ratified by Law Number 5 of 1998 concerning the Ratification of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

⁴⁷ Reginald Siddarta, Andreas Mariano, And Alpinus Pan, "Keadilan Dalam Kasus Kekerasan Seksual (Implementasi Dan Makna Keadilan Terhadap Perempuan Korban Kekerasan Seksual Di Dunia Maya Dan Dunia Nyata)," *Jurnal Paradigma Hukum Pembangunan* 8, No. 1 (2023): 79–101.

FGM clearly violates this right because the practice is not supported by a legitimate medical rationale and is often carried out with unhygienic tools, which increases the risk of infection and physical injury.⁴⁸ In addition, traditional tools used in FGM procedures, such as broken glass or sharp metal, not only increase the risk of serious injury but also violate women's right to adequate and safe health care.

Worldwide, FGM practices vary depending on local culture and traditions. In Indonesia, the most common types of FGM are type I (partial clitoral circumcision) and type IV (a less severe procedure),⁴⁹ which is mostly done for reasons of cleanliness, virginity, or family honor. Meanwhile, in North African countries such as Egypt, type II (partial removal of the clitoris and labia) is more often performed. These variations show that FGM practices are not only related to certain religious or cultural beliefs, but also reflect a patriarchal view

⁴⁸ Winda Apriani and Askana Fikriana, "Hukum Hak Asasi Manusia; Perspektif Internasional Tentang Kesenjangan Yang Perlu Disikapi," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 1, no. 1 (2023): 35–46.

⁴⁹ Siti Nisrofah, "Pemotongan Dan Pelukaan Genitalia Perempuan (P2GP): Sebuah Tinjauan Multidisipliner," *Usrotuna: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 1, no. 1 (2024): 45–60.

of women's bodies. This view considers women's bodies as objects that need to be controlled to maintain the sanctity or dignity of the family, which in turn exacerbates existing gender inequalities in society.

The international community has worked hard to eradicate FGM and raise awareness about its devastating impacts. WHO, UNICEF, and other human rights organizations have collaborated with countries to advocate for an end to the practice and provide support to girls who are victims of FGM. While progress has been made in reducing the prevalence of FGM in some countries, it is still practiced in many communities, both in developing and more developed parts of the world. It is therefore vital that every country commits to eliminating the practice and respecting the human rights of women and children.

To this end, protecting the human rights of women and children is essential so that every individual, regardless of gender or age, can live a safe, healthy and dignified life without being threatened by harmful traditions or practices. Countries should strengthen laws prohibiting FGM,

educate the public about its dangers, and provide better protection for women and children at risk. This is a crucial step toward creating a more just and equal world for all, without exception.

The Indonesian government has an important role in eliminating the practice of FGM, which still occurs in some communities as part of tradition or culture. One of the first steps that can be taken is to raise public awareness about the dangers of FGM through public campaigns involving religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community organizations. This culture-based approach should emphasize that FGM is not a religious obligation or an irreplaceable tradition, but rather a practice that is detrimental to women's physical and mental health and rights. In addition, education about the dangers of FGM can be included in the school curriculum, so that the younger generation gets a better understanding early on and is able to become agents of change in their communities.

In terms of regulation, the government needs to draft and strengthen regulations that prohibit FGM by considering existing laws,

complete with legal sanctions for perpetrators. Supervision also needs to be increased for medical personnel so that they are not involved in this practice, even if it is done at the request of the family. Law enforcement must be accompanied by intensive socialization to the community, so that they understand that FGM is not only a dangerous act but also violates human rights. With strict regulations, the government can provide clear legal protection for women and girls who are vulnerable to this practice.

On the other hand, empowering women is also a key step in eliminating FGM. The government can provide skills training and economic empowerment programs for women in areas where FGM is still practiced, so that they have greater access to education and information. In addition, the government can encourage communities to replace FGM with symbolic rituals that do not involve cutting or removing organs. This effort can maintain local cultural values without compromising women's health. Equally important, physical and psychological rehabilitation services also need to be provided to

help FGM victims recover from the trauma they have experienced.

The government can also collaborate with international organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, and other global agencies to obtain guidance and support in the implementation of FGM elimination policies. This collaboration can also be used to share the best practices with other countries that have successfully reduced the prevalence of FGM. In addition, local research should be conducted to identify areas that still practice FGM and understand the cultural or social motivations behind it. With this data, the government can design policies that are evidence-based and more effective in targeting communities that need intervention. Through a combination of education, regulatory strengthening, women's empowerment, victim rehabilitation, and international cooperation, Indonesia can accelerate the elimination of FGM. These measures not only protect women's health and rights but also support the government's commitment to gender equality, public health, and sustainable development goals.

C. Conclusion

Legal inconsistencies related to FGM in Indonesia arise due to conflicts between various applicable legal frameworks. On the one hand, international law, especially CEDAW which has been ratified by Indonesia, and the Human Rights (HAM) perspective emphasize that FGM is a practice that violates women's rights and must be abolished. However, on the other hand, Islamic law and customary law in some contexts still teach or allow the practice of female circumcision, although at different levels and with different purposes. National regulations are also unclear, where rules related to FGM change from time to time, from being allowed, prohibited, to being left without strict supervision. This inconsistency has an impact on legal protection, weak protection for women, and differences in practice in various regions in Indonesia. Therefore, a clearer and more assertive legal harmonization is needed to overcome this normative conflict, either through policy revision, public education, or an approach that respects local values without being accompanied by protection of women's human rights.

FGM, or female circumcision, is a practice that harms women's physical and psychological health, and is a violation of human rights. The practice is rooted in a patriarchal system that considers women to be controlled in order to maintain family honor. FGM causes serious repercussions such as infection, chronic pain, reproductive disorders, and psychological trauma. Despite international efforts to abolish the practice, FGM is still practiced in many places, including Indonesia. Countries need to strengthen regulations, raise awareness, and provide better protection for women and children to end this practice.

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