

# Cameroon



1.4%<sup>1</sup>

## Key Findings

In 2004, the prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 was 1.4%.  
84.1% of women and 84.6% of men who have heard of FGM believe it should be discontinued.<sup>2</sup>

### **Geography:**

The highest prevalence is found in the far north, at 5.4%<sup>3</sup>

### **Age:**

Data suggests FGM is most likely to be performed between the ages of five and nine<sup>4</sup>

### **Type:**

'Cut, flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM practised<sup>5</sup>

### **Agent:**

89% of girls/women are cut by traditional midwives/birth attendants<sup>6</sup>

## Development Indicators

**HDI Rank:** 151 out of 189 countries (2018)<sup>7</sup>

**SDG Gender Index Rating:** 118 out of 129 countries (2019)<sup>8</sup>

**Population:** 24,436,311 (as at 11 May 2017), with a 2.58% growth rate (2016 est.)<sup>9</sup>

**Infant Mortality Rate:** 57 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)<sup>10</sup>

**Maternal Mortality Ratio:** 596 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015)<sup>11</sup>

**Literacy:** 75% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write<sup>12</sup>

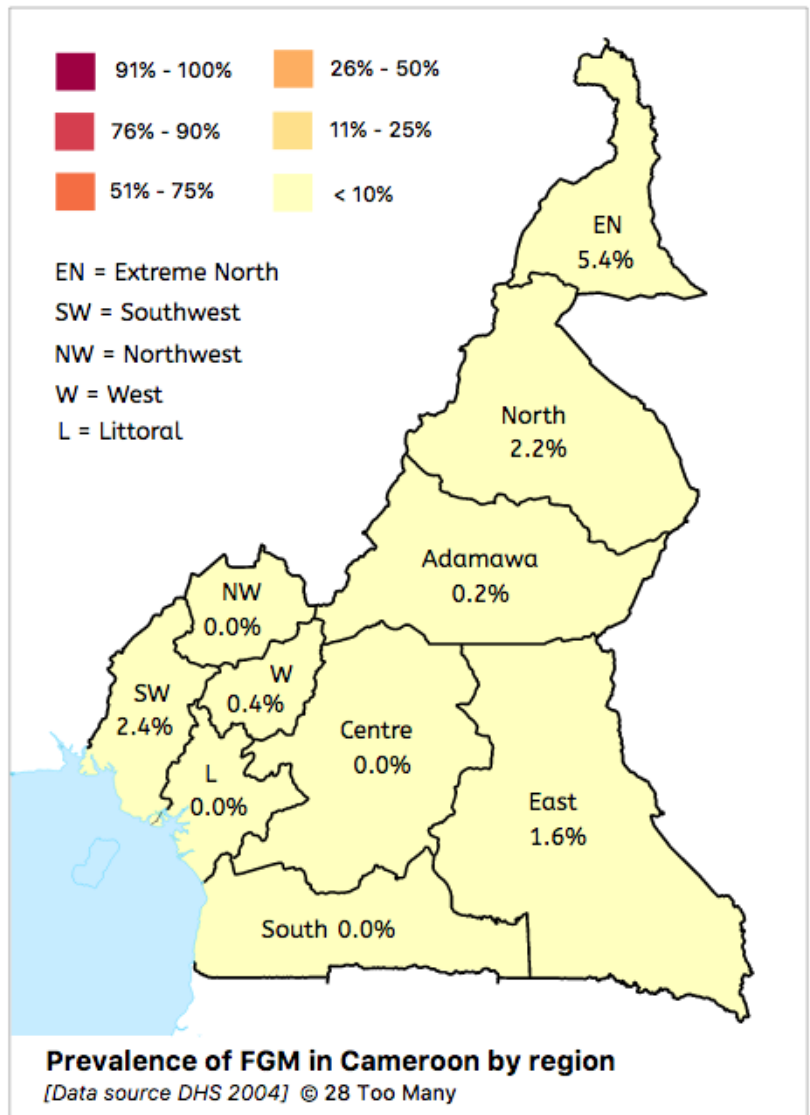
*'The advancement of women cannot be conceived of without an end to FGM.'*  
~ Jacqueline Ntep, a manager at the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and  
the Family<sup>13</sup>

## Prevalence

The region and the ethnic group with the highest prevalence are Extrême-Nord, at 5.4%, and the Arabe-Choa/Peulh/Maoussa/Kanuri, at 12.7%, although the low numbers of women in the survey who have undergone FGM make figures further broken down by region and ethnic group somewhat unreliable. FGM is more prevalent among women who practice Islam (5.8%) than among women of other religions, and among women who live in rural areas (2.1%) than among those who live in urban areas (0.9%). The prevalence in the capital city of Yaoundé is also 0.9%.

70.4% of men and more than half of women who have heard of FGM see no benefit in it. The higher the level of education a person has received, the more likely they are to hold the opinion that FGM has no benefits. 84.1% of women and 84.6% of men who have heard of FGM believe it should be discontinued, but 8.1% of women and 3.9% of men think it is required by their religion.<sup>14</sup>

To date, there is not enough data available on FGM in Cameroon to determine any reliable trends.



## Cameroonian Law

In July 2016 the Penal Code of Cameroon was amended to include a reference to 'genital mutilation'. Section 277 states, 'Whoever permanently deprives another of the use of the whole or any part of any member, organ or sense shall be punished with imprisonment from 10 (ten) to 20 (twenty) years.' There is a lack of evidence, however, of any FGM cases being prosecuted under this law.

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- 1 (**'DHS'**): Institut National de la Statistique (INS) et ORC Macro (2004) *Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Cameroun 2004*. Calverton, Maryland, USA: INS et ORC Macro, p.236. Available at <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR163/FR163-CM04.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2017).
  - 2 DHS, pp.236 & 242.
  - 3 DHS, p.236.
  - 4 DHS, p.237.
  - 5 DHS, p. 237.
  - 6 DHS, p.238.
  - 7 United Nations Development Programme (2018) *Human Development Reports*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update> (accessed 12 June 2019).
  - 8 Equal Measures 2030 (2019) *Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index*, pp.12–13. Available at [www.data.em2030.org/2019-global-report](http://www.data.em2030.org/2019-global-report) (accessed 12 June 2019).
  - 9 - Country Meters (2017) *Cameroon*, 11 May 2017. Available at <http://countrymeters.info/en/Cameroon> (accessed 11 May 2017).
    - Central Intelligence Agency (2017) *World Factbook: Cameroon*, 12 January. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cm.html> (accessed 11 May 2017).
  - 10 Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Cameroon*. Available at [http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Cameroon\\_2015.pdf](http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Cameroon_2015.pdf) (accessed 11 May 2017).
  - 11 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal mortality in 1990-2015: Cameroon*. Available at [http://www.who.int/gho/maternal\\_health/countries/cmr.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/cmr.pdf?ua=1) (accessed 11 May 2017).
  - 12 Central Intelligence Agency, *op. cit.*
  - 13 Sylvestre Tetchiada (2006) 'Rights – Cameroon: Finally, a Law Against Female Genital Mutilation?', *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 3 July. Available at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2006/07/rights-cameroon-finally-a-law-against-female-genital-mutilation/>.
  - 14 DHS, pp.236, 239 & 241-242.

**UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:**

UNICEF (2013) *Cameroon: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country\\_profiles/Cameroon/FGMC\\_CMR.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Cameroon/FGMC_CMR.pdf) (accessed 11 May 2017).

**Images on website:**

- 1 akturer (2015) *BATOUFAM – CAMEROON / 15.01.2015: A primary school in Batoufam, Cameroon, the students are learning English*. Shutterstock ID 385411114.
- 2 Yann karl (2012) *Bamileke women cooking a local meal for their husband*. Available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ABamileke\\_Women.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ABamileke_Women.JPG). CCL: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>.
- 3 akturer (2015) *BATOUFAM – CAMEROON / 14.01.2015: An African woman is cleaning the fish in front of her house, Cameroon*. Shutterstock ID 385422310.