

Somaliland



99.2%¹

Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 in Somalia and Somaliland is 99.2%.²
72% of women believe that FGM is a requirement of their religion.³

Geography:

Prevalence is marginally higher among nomadic populations (99.7%), but universally high in all locations⁴

Age:

Most girls are cut between the ages of 10 and 14

Type:

Most women have undergone Type III FGM (infibulation/‘sewn closed’), which is also known as Pharaonic FGM

Agent:

Predominantly traditional practitioners, but medicalised FGM is on the rise

Development Indicators

HDI Rank: no reliable data; the UNDP estimated in 2010 a rank of 165 out of 170 countries⁵

Population: 4–5 million

Infant Mortality Rate: 85 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)⁶

Maternal Mortality Ratio: 692 deaths per 100,000 live births⁷

Literacy: 40% (female – 36.2%; male – 43.8%)⁸

*We should stand against FGM; it has caused death to many and left others suffering throughout their lives.
Let's help girls to enjoy their body intact and no longer be victims.
~Dr Mariam Dahir, Chair of the Youth Anti-FGM Network, Somaliland*

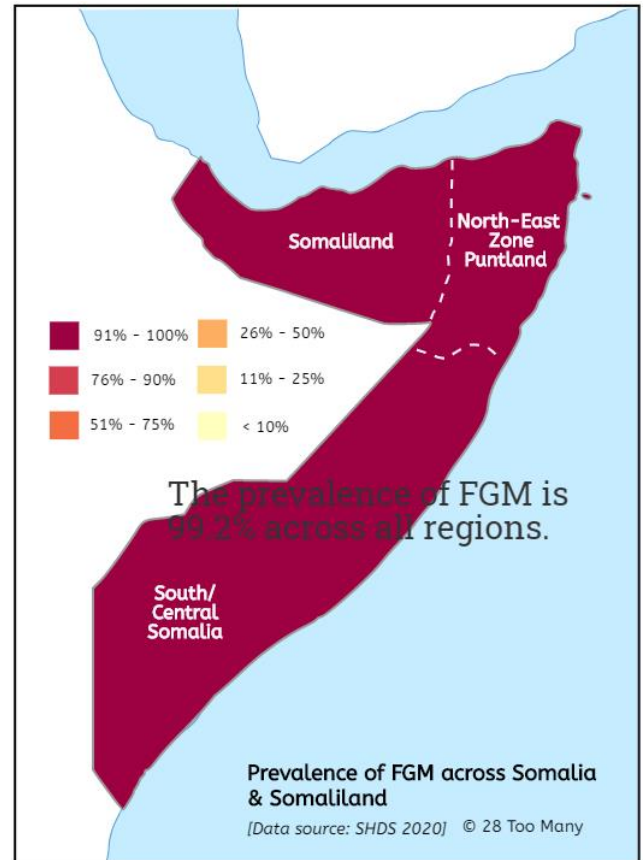
Prevalence

In 2020, the prevalence of FGM across Somalia and Somaliland was 99.2%. In 2011, prevalence in Somaliland was 99.1% (women aged 15–49).

Across both Somali and Somaliland, women who live in rural areas are only slightly more likely to undergo FGM than those who live in urban areas. The prevalence is highest among nomadic women, but is universally high (over 98%) among women living in all areas.⁹

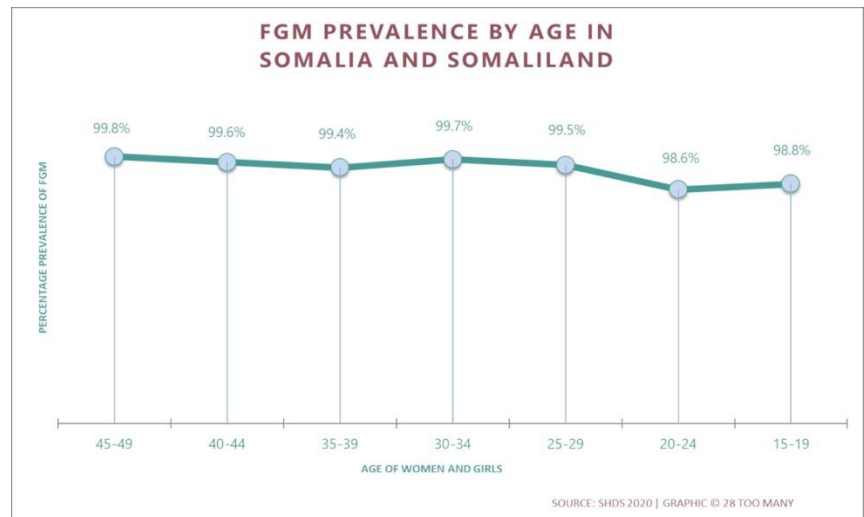
76.4% of women believe that FGM should continue and 18.9% believe that it should not.¹⁰

While support for Type III (Pharaonic) FGM has declined in recent years, other types of FGM referred to as ‘Sunni’ remain popular. More than four in five women in the oldest age group experienced Pharaonic cutting, compared to less than half of women in the youngest age group.¹¹



FGM prevalence among women aged 15–49 has remained broadly consistent for some time.

Breaking down the 2020 data by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45–49 is 99.8%, while for the youngest age group it is 98.8%, but some women over the age of 15 may yet be cut.¹²



Somali Law

There is currently no national law in place banning FGM in Somaliland. New national legislation has been drafted and will enter a consultation phase with stakeholders in 2019.

In the run-up to the November 2017 presidential elections, it was reported that all three candidates publicly pledged to outlaw FGM.

In February 2018 the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Somaliland issued a fatwa banning the most severe type of FGM, Type III (infibulation/'sewn closed').

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- 1 (**'SL-MICS 2011'**): UNICEF Somalia and Somaliland Ministry of Planning and National Development (2014) *Somaliland Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011, Final Report*, p.100. Nairobi, Kenya: UNICEF, Somalia and Somaliland Ministry of Planning and National Development, Somaliland. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS4/Eastern%20and%20Southern%20Africa/Somalia%20%28Somaliland%29/2011/Final/Somalia%20%28Somaliland%29%202011%20MICS_English.pdf .
 - 2 SHDS 2020, p.223.
 - 3 SHDS 2020, p.219.
 - 4 SHDS 2020, p.223.
 - 5 United Nations Development Programme (2015) *Human Development Index*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506> (accessed 16 May 2017).
 - 6 Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Somalia*. Available at http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Somalia_2015.pdf (accessed 26 June 2017).
 - 7 SHDS 2020, p.xxiii.
 - 8 UNFPA (2016) *Educational Characteristics of the Somali People*, p.7. Available at http://www.analyticalreports.org/pdf/UNFPA_PESS_Vol_3.pdf.
 - 9 SHDS 2020, p.223.
 - 10 SHDS 2020, p.223.
 - 11 SHDS 2020, p.220.
 - 12 SHDS 2020, p.220.

UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:

UNICEF (2013) *Somalia: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Somalia/FGMC_SOM.pdf (accessed 1 May 2017).

Images on website:

- 1 Free Wind 2014 (2010) *HARGEISA, SOMALIA – JANUARY 11, 2010: African refugee camp on the outskirts of Hargeisa in Somaliland. With the support of UNICEF, an international organization it operates the school*. Shutterstock ID 173095733.
- 2 Sadik Gulec (2011) *DADAAB, SOMALIA – AUGUST 15: Unidentified woman & children live in the Dadaab refugee camp where thousands of Somalis wait for help because of hunger on August 15, 2011 in Dadaab, Somalia*. Shutterstock ID 83490673.
- 3 Free Wind 2014 (2010) *HARGEISA, SOMALIA – JANUARY 8, 2010: Unidentified Somalis in the streets of the city of Hargeysa. City in Somalia, capital of unrecognized state of Somaliland. Much of the population lives in poverty*. Shutterstock ID 187165037.