



FGM IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: SHORT REPORT

November 2019

Key Findings and Indicators¹



Prevalence: In the Central African Republic (CAR), the prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is 24.2%



Geography: The prefectures with the highest prevalence are in the centre



Age: In 2006, more than half of girls aged 0–14 who had undergone FGM were cut between the ages of 10 and 14



Type: 'Flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM practised



Agent: Approximately 89% of girls aged 0–14 who have undergone FGM were cut by a traditional practitioner



Attitudes: 75.2% of women (aged 15–49) and 55.5% of men (aged 15–59) think FGM should be abandoned



HDI Rank: 188 out of 189 countries (2018)



SDG Gender Index Rating: No data available



Population: 5,084,422 (as at 8 June 2017), with a 2.12% growth rate (2016 est.)



Infant Mortality Rate: 92 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)



Maternal Mortality Ratio: 882 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015)



Literacy: 36.8% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write

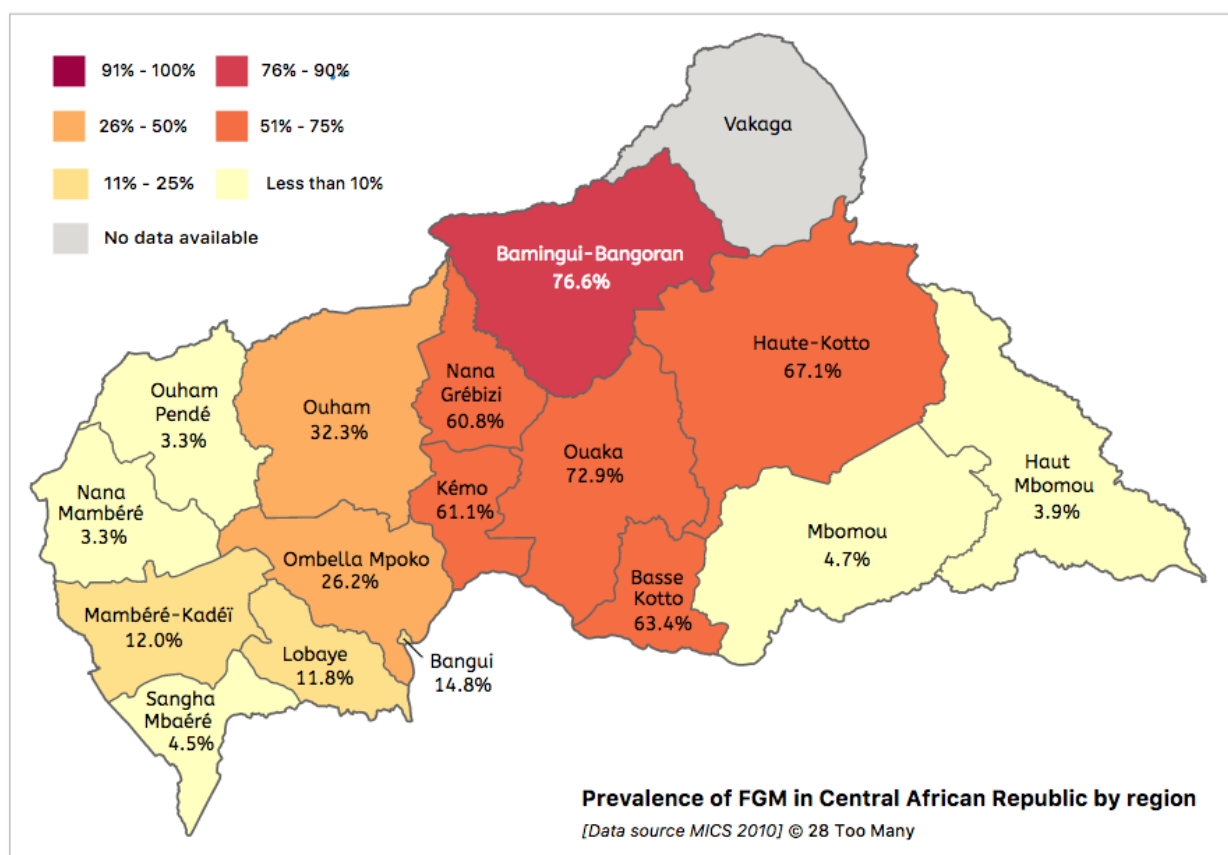
Prevalence of FGM

FGM is practised across all prefectures and ethnic groups in the CAR. The prefectures with the highest prevalence are in the centre of the country: Bamingui-Bangoran (76.6%), Ouaka (72.9%) and Haute-Kotto (67.1%). The prefectures with the lowest prevalence are all 3–4%. Women aged 15–49 who live in rural areas are more likely to undergo FGM (28.7%) than those who live in urban areas (18.1%).

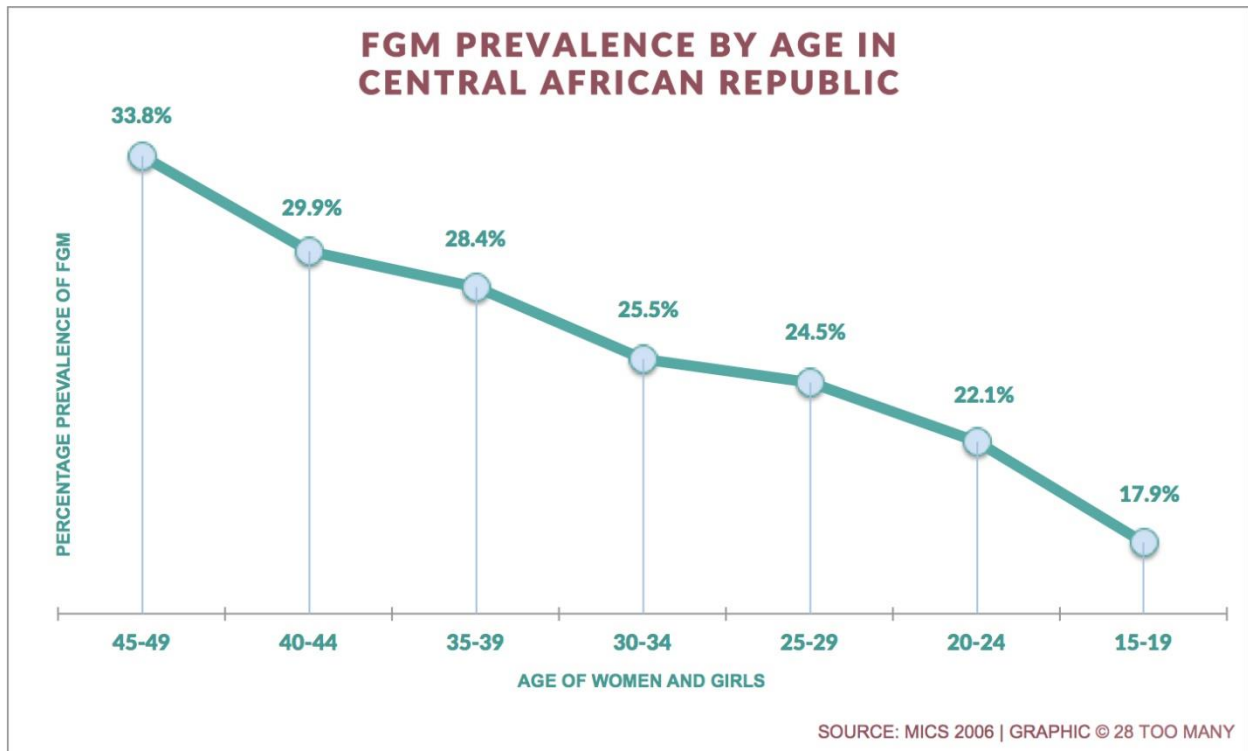
Prevalence of FGM is inversely correlated with level of wealth.

The highest prevalence of FGM is found in households where the head is of Banda ethnicity (53.4% of women aged 15–49); the lowest is found in households where the head is of Mboum ethnicity (2.6%).²

FGM is practised almost equally by adherents of all religions in the CAR (21–25%).³



Trends in FGM Prevalence



Between 2006 and 2010, the overall prevalence for women aged 15–49 fell from 25.7% to 24.2%. Due to the large age-range of women included, however, the overall prevalence alone may not fully reflect the progress that has been made in recent years. Breaking down by age group the most recent data (which is from 2006) shows that the prevalence for women aged 45–49 is 33.8%, while for the youngest age-group this has fallen to 17.9%. Despite the fact that a small proportion of women may be cut after the age of 15, the data demonstrates a clear trend towards lower prevalences among younger women.⁴

Cross-Border FGM

In some countries where FGM has become illegal, the practice has been pushed underground and across borders to avoid prosecution. It is not known to what extent the movement across national borders for the purpose of FGM is an issue for the CAR.

Medicalised FGM

The medicalisation of FGM does not appear to be significant in the CAR. According to available data, 1.9% of women who have had FGM are reported to be cut by a health professional.⁵

Legislation

The main law against FGM is **Law No. 06.032 on the Protection of Women Against Violence in Central African Republic**, dated 27 December 2006.⁶ **Law No. 10.001**, the **Penal Code** of the Central African Republic, dated 6 January 2010, also criminalises the performance of FGM.⁷ Both **Law No. 06.032** and the **Penal Code** prohibit and set out the punishments for the practice, planning, or promotion of FGM carried out 'by traditional or modern methods'. They also require anyone who is aware of any planned or previously performed FGM to report it to the appropriate authorities. There is a lack of evidence, however, of any FGM cases being prosecuted under these laws.

Current legislation does not directly address cross-border FGM, and there does not appear to be any specific regulation or other legislation relating to FGM carried out on or by citizens of the CAR in other countries. Laws also do not directly reference FGM carried out by a health professional or in a medical setting.

Work to End FGM

The CAR continues to face many challenges, despite signing a peace and reconciliation agreement in February 2019. Many people have been displaced from their homes and, although the UN reports a decrease in human-rights violations, restricted movement, attacks, kidnappings and sexual violence continue.⁸ This unstable situation makes it difficult to enforce laws, record cases of FGM and generally undertake programmes to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and practices such as FGM.

The lack of a functioning judicial system means that laws are unlikely to act as a deterrent and perpetrators are not being prosecuted. Some commentators have reported that no serious crimes have been prosecuted since 2013, and many groups have carried out executions and sexual violence with impunity.⁹ A United Nations Human Rights Council report in 2016 by an independent expert on the situation noted that 'criminal justice remains practically non-existent' and that, between July 2015 and January 2017, the Criminal Court of Bangui held only one session, following a five-year period of inactivity.¹⁰ The lack of resources and staff remains a major obstacle, and, outside of Bangui, access to judicial resources is even more limited.

FGM is reportedly continuing in many parts of the country – for example, in the regions of Damara and Bogangolo.¹¹

References

- 1 - ('MICS'): ICASEES (2010) *Enquête par grappes à indicateurs multiples MICS, RCA 2010 Rapport final*, pp.241–242. Bangui, RCA ICASEES. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS4/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Central%20African%20Republic/2010/Final/Central%20African%20Republic%202010%20MICS_French.pdf (accessed 8 June 2017).
- UNICEF (2013) *Central African Republic: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, p.2. Available at https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Central%20African%20Republic/FGMC_CAF.pdf (accessed 8 June 2017).
- United Nations Development Programme (2018) *Human Development Reports*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update> (accessed 12 June 2019).
- 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.
- Country Meters (2017) *Central African Republic*, 8 June 2017. Available at http://countrymeters.info/en/Central_African_Republic (accessed 8 June 2017).
- Central Intelligence Agency (2016) *World Factbook: Central African Republic*, 30 May. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ct.html> (accessed 8 June 2017).
- Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Central African Republic*. Available at http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/CAR_2015.pdf (accessed 8 June 2017).
- WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal mortality in 1990–2015: Central African Republic*. Available at http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/caf.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 8 June 2017).
- 2 MICS, pp.241–242.
- 3 UNICEF, *op. cit.*
- 4 - MICS, pp.241–242.
- ICASEES (2009) *Enquête par Grappe à Indicateurs Multiples, couplée avec la Sérologie VIH et Anémie 2006*. Bangui, RCA ICASEES, p.186. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS3/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Central%20African%20Republic/2006/Final/Central%20African%20Republic%202006%20MICS_French.pdf (accessed 8 June 2017).
- 5 Population Reference Bureau (2017) *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends*, p.10. Available at <http://www.prb.org/pdf17/FGMC%20Poster%202017.pdf>.
- 6 *République Centrafricaine: Loi no. 06.032 du 2006, portant protection de la femme contre la violence en République Centrafricaine [Central African Republic]* (2006) Available at <http://www.refworld.org/docid/54f821684.html>.
- 7 Loi n° 10.001 portant Code pénal centrafricain (2010) *LOI N°10.001 Portant Code Penal Centrafricain*. Available at http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=195086.
- 8 UN News (2019) *Central African Republic: 'Transform dreams of peace into reality': mission chief tells Security Council*, 25 October. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/10/1050041>.
- 9 See Lewis Mudge (2017) 'A Step Toward Justice in the Central African Republic', *Human Rights Watch*, 21 February 21. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/21/step-toward-justice-central-african-republic>.
- 10 Human Rights Council (2016) *Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic*. UN General Assembly A/HRC/33/63. Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/33/63.
- 11 Journal de Bangui (2016) *Damara-Bogangolo: une sage-femme déplore l'excision sur les filles*, 14 January. Available at <http://www.journaldebangui.com/article.php?aid=9227>.

Cover image: hdptcar (2007) *Schools girls in the Central African Republic*. Available at <https://flic.kr/p/2h8GyP>.
CCL: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>.

Please note that the use of a photograph of any girl or woman in this report does not imply that she has, nor has not, undergone FGM.



© 28 Too Many 2019
Registered Charity No. 1150379
Limited Company No. 08122211
Email: info@28toomany.org