

The Gambia



74.9%¹

Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is 74.9%.
65% of women who have heard of FGM think the practice should continue.²

Geography:

Basse, the most rural region of the country, has the highest prevalence (96.7% of women aged 15–49); Banjul, the most urbanised area, has the lowest prevalence (47.4%)³

Age:

54.8% of women aged 15–49 were cut before the age of 5; 28.1% between the ages of 5 and 9⁴

Type:

'Cut, flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM practised⁵

Agent:

95.7% of FGM is carried out by 'traditional circumcisers'⁶

Development Indicators

HDI Rank: 174 out of 189 countries (2018)⁷

Population: 2,114,435 (as at 30 May 2017), with a 2.11% growth rate (2016 est.)⁸

Infant Mortality Rate: 48 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)⁹

Maternal Mortality Ratio: 706 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015)¹⁰

Literacy: 55.5% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write¹¹

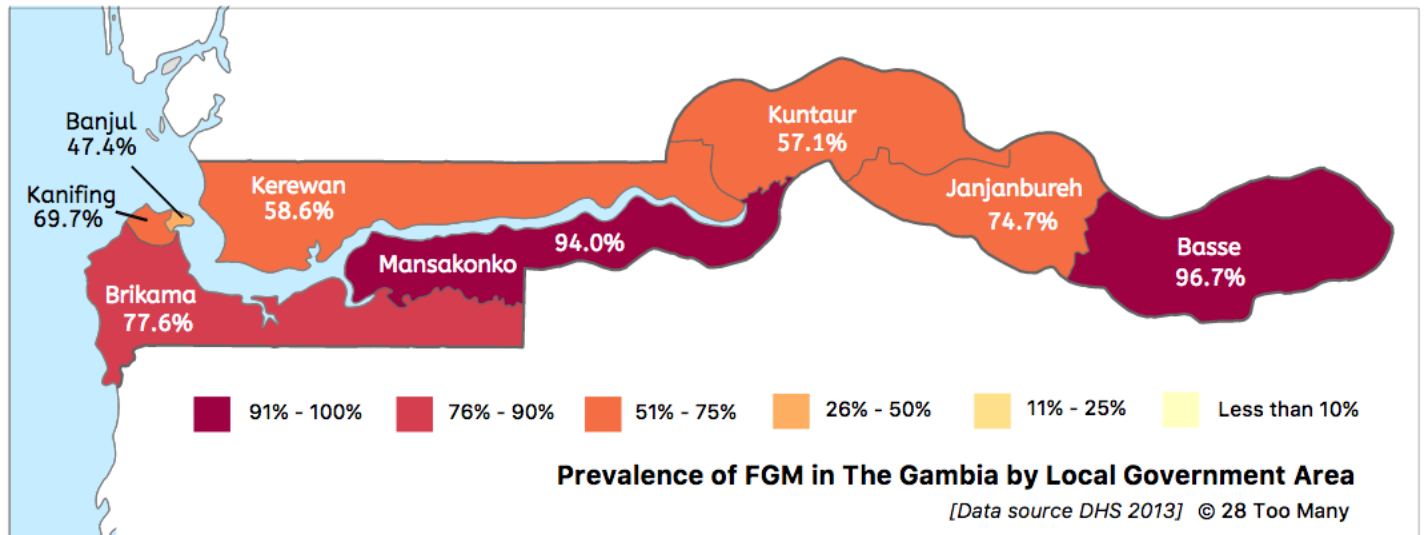
*'Eradicating FGM does not take one single individual or organisation.
It's a collective effort by government, civil society organisations
and young people.'*

~ Youth Anti-FGM Network, The Gambia

Prevalence

FGM is practised across all eight Local Government Areas ('LGAs') in The Gambia, and by both Christians (20.9% of women aged 15–49) and Muslims (77.3%). The LGA with the highest prevalence is Basse, the eastern-most and most rural region, at 96.7% of women aged 15–49. The LGA with the lowest prevalence is Banjul, a coastal area and the most urbanised, at 47.4%. The Basse region is predominantly inhabited by the Sarahule, Mandinka and Fula ethnic

groups, whereas the coastal areas of Banjul and Kanifing are predominantly inhabited by the Wolof (among whom the prevalence of FGM has historically been the lowest among The Gambia's different ethnic groups) and the Mandinka. Overall, the prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 living in urban areas is 71.6%, and for those living in rural areas is 79.1%.¹²



According to the 2013 DHS survey, the overall prevalence for women aged 15–49 is 74.9%. Although the results from the DHS and MICS surveys may not be directly comparable, the 2010 MICS survey found that prevalence for the same age-range was 76.3%, suggesting that there may have been a small decrease in prevalence.

Of women aged 15–49 who have heard of FGM, 65% feel that the practice should continue, although among women who have not undergone FGM, that figure drops to 5.4%.¹³

Gambian Law

In December 2015, the Gambian Government passed legislation that specifically prohibits the practice of FGM (Section 32A of The Women's (Amendment) Act; Section 32B criminalises requesting FGM and knowing that it has taken place but failing to report it).

- 1 (**'DHS'**): The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) and ICF International (2014) *The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013*, p.222. Banjul, The Gambia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: GBOS and ICF International. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS4/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Gambia/2010/Final/Gambia%202010%20MICS_English.pdf (accessed 23 July 2018).
- 2 DHS, pp.222 & 223.
- 3 DHS, p.222.
- 4 DHS, p.222.
- 5 DHS, p.222.
- 6 DHS, p.223.
- 7 United Nations Development Programme (2018) *Human Development Reports*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update> (accessed 12 June 2019).
- 8 - Country Meters (2017) *The Gambia*, 30 May 2017. Available at <http://countrymeters.info/en/Gambia> (accessed 30 May 2017).
 - Central Intelligence Agency (2016) *World Factbook: The Gambia*, 8 May. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ga.html> (accessed 30 May 2017).
- 9 Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Gambia*. Available at http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Gambia_2015.pdf (accessed 30 May 2017).
- 10 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal Mortality in 1990-2015: Gambia*. Available at http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/gmb.pdf?ua=11 (accessed 30 May 2017).
- 11 Central Intelligence Agency, *op. cit.*
- 12 - DHS, p.222.
 - (**'MICS 2010'**): The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) (2011) *The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010, Final Report. Banjul, The Gambia: The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS)*, p.164. Available at <http://www.gbos.gov.gm/uploads/survey/UNICEFGambiaMICSIV.pdf> (accessed 31 May 2017).
- 13 - DHS, pp.222-223.
 - MICS 2010, p.164.

UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:

UNICEF (2016) *Gambia: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Gambia/FGMC_GMB.pdf (accessed 30 May 2017).

Images on website:

- 1 Killroy Productions (undated) African mother. Shutterstock ID 2709226.
- 2 Vladimir Zhoga (2013) WASSU/GAMBIA – NOVEMBER 18, 2013: *Very young African mother with her newborn child hanging on her back stands with the group of children on the street of Wassu, Gambia*. Shutterstock ID 409449481.
- 3 Katie Sh (2017) FARAFENNI, GAMBIA – JANUARY, 11, 2017: *Unidentified three Gambian girls with books*. Shutterstock ID 560009407.