

Somalia

Approximately 98%¹



Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is approximately 98%.
64.5% of women aged 15–49 believe that FGM should continue.²

Geography:

In 2006, prevalence in the South/Central Zone was 99.2%, and in 2011 in the North-East Zone (Puntland) it was 98% (women aged 15–49)³

Age:

Most girls are cut between the ages of 10 and 14⁴

Type:

Most women have undergone Type III FGM (infibulation/'sewn closed'), which is also known as Pharaonic FGM⁵

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 countries⁶

Population: 11–12 million (2019), with a 2.08% growth rate (2018 est.)⁷

Infant Mortality Rate: 85 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)⁸

Maternal Mortality Ratio: 732 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015)⁹

Literacy: 38.3% in the South/Central Zone; 42.9% in the North-East Zone (Puntland)¹⁰

*'The youth are our future. If we teach young people to how to help,
and give them the tools to help themselves,
we can eradicate FGM for the generations to come.'*

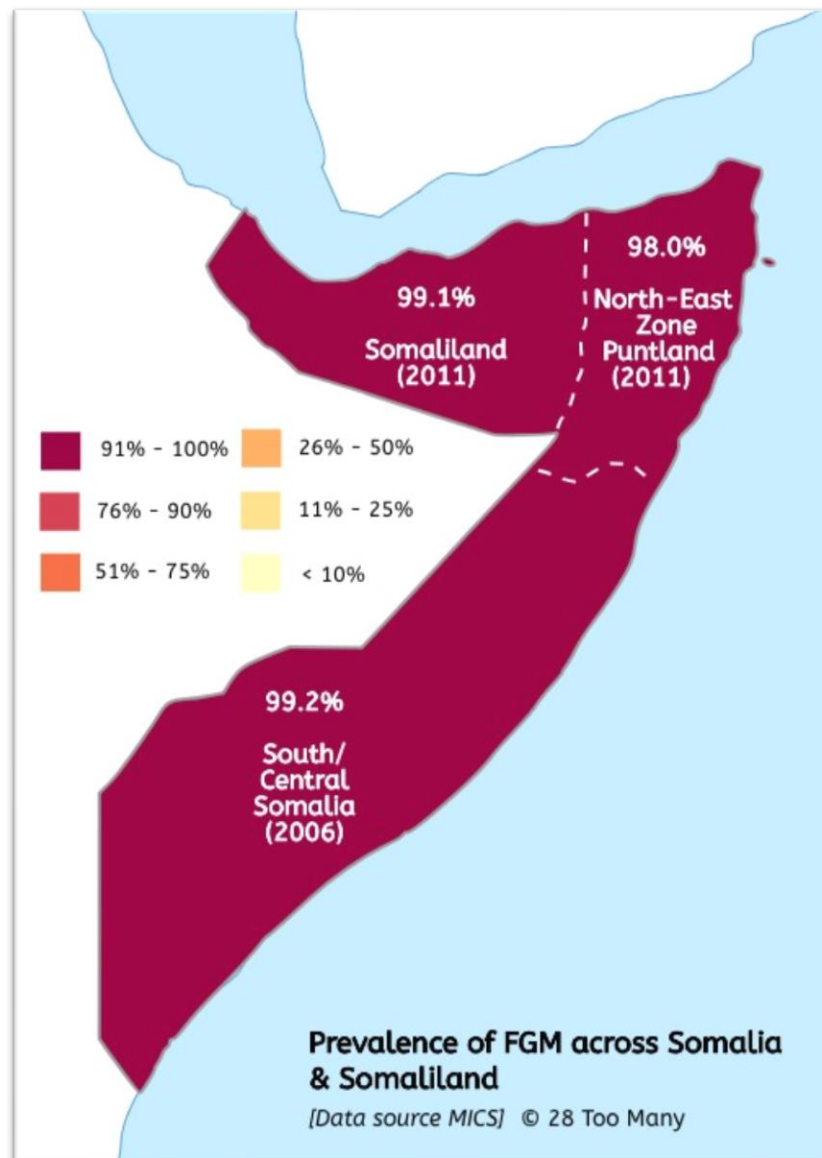
~ Somali FGM survivor Hibo Wardere¹¹

Prevalence

In 2006, prevalence in the South/Central Zone was 99.2% and in 2011 in the North-East Zone (Puntland) it was 98% (women aged 15–49). Women who live in rural areas are only slightly more likely to undergo FGM than those who live in urban areas.

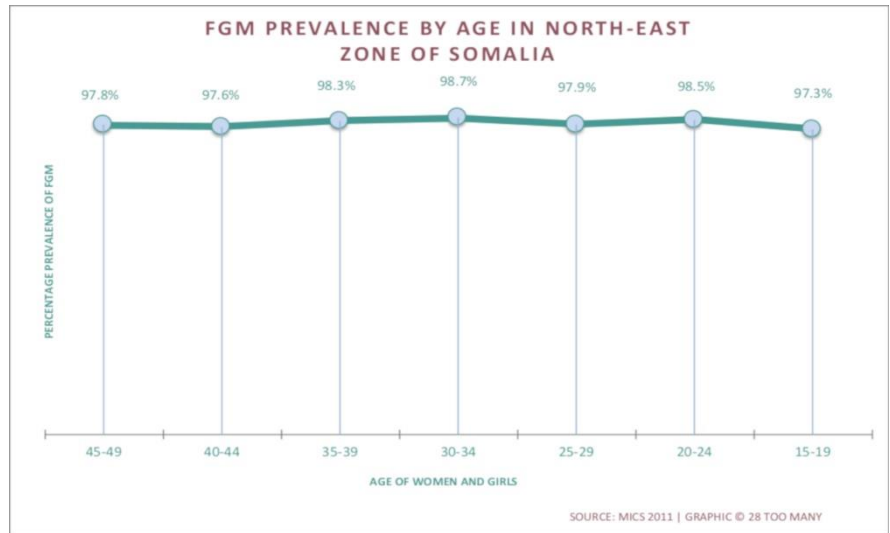
Across the entire region of Somalia and Somaliland, 64.5% of women believe that FGM should continue and 32.8% believe that it should not (2006).¹²

While support for Type III (Pharaonic) FGM has declined in recent years, other types of FGM referred to as 'sunna' remain popular.



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

Breaking down the 2011 data for the North-East Zone by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45–49 is 97.8%, while for the youngest age group it is 95.8%, but some girls over the age of 15 may yet be cut, and ideally more data would be required to confirm this trend.¹³



Somali Law

There is currently no national law in place banning FGM in Somalia. New national legislation is being drafted and will go through a consultation phase with stakeholders during 2019.

In November 2013, 18 religious leaders in Puntland signed a fatwa against FGM, which was witnessed by various ministers.

In March 2014, the president of Puntland approved an official policy outlawing all forms of FGM; however, parliamentary legislation is not yet in place.

- 1 - **Calculated from the S-MICS 2006 dataset.** 'S-MICS 2006': UNICEF Somalia (2006) *Somalia: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006*. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS3/Eastern%20and%20Southern%20Africa/Somalia/2006/Final/Somalia%202006%20MICS_English.pdf.
- (**SNE-MICS 2011**): UNICEF Somalia and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (2014) *Northeast Zone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011, Final Report*. Nairobi, Kenya: UNICEF, Somalia and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Available at https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS4/Eastern%20and%20Southern%20Africa/Somalia%20%28Northeast%20Zone%29/2011/Final/Somalia%20%28Northeast%20Zone%29%202011%20MICS_English.pdf.
- 2 S-MICS 2006, p.138.
- 3 - S-MICS 2006, p.138.
- SNE-MICS 2011, p.103.
- 4 SNE-MICS 2011, p.104.
- 5 SNE-MICS 2011, p.103.
- 6 United Nations Development Programme (2015) *Human Development Index*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506> (accessed 16 May 2017).
- 7 Central Intelligence Agency (2019) *World Factbook: Somalia*, 29 February. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html> (accessed 7 March 2019).
- 8 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).
- 9 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal Mortality in 1990-2015: Somalia*. Available at http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/som.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 26 June 2017).
- 10 Somalia Federal Republic Ministry of Human Development and Public Services (2014) *Programme Document 2014–2016: Programme Implementation Grant – Global Partnership for Education*, pp29–30. Available at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/program-document-gpe-grant-somalia-federal-government-2014-2016>.
- 11 Charlotte Lytton (2015) 'FGM survivor: 'The pain was so bad, I prayed to God to take me then and there'', *The Telegraph*, 6 February. Available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11390949/FGM-survivor-The-pain-was-so-bad-I-prayed-to-God-to-take-me-then-and-there.html> (accessed 27 June 2017).
- 12 - S-MICS 2006, p.138.
- SNE-MICS 2011, p.103.
- 13 SNE-MICS 2011, p.103.

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.