



## Press release

Wednesday, July 9, 2014

### **IAWP Provides Written Evidence to UK Report into Female Genital Mutilation**

The International Association of Women Police (IAWP) has provided written evidence to the UK Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons report, Female Genital Mutilation: The Case for a National Action Plan.

In the report, the Committee recommends the immediate implementation of a national action plan and specific steps to respond to the growing crisis.

The IAWP has campaigned against FGM for many years, with some of its members actively involved in tackling the issue along with providing support to victims.

The IAWP submission included evidence from its own research and interviews with people working to tackle FGM throughout the world, as well as information sent to them from police officers.

Jane Townsley, President of the IAWP who submitted the written evidence on behalf of the organisation, said: "It is clear to us that a robust multi-agency framework is needed in the UK to enable partners to work together more closely. Health and education providers play a key role here as they are often the first people to become aware of a victim of FGM. They need to have confidence in a criminal justice and child safeguarding process that will investigate and prosecute offenders as well as protecting and supporting victims.

"Education is vital, both within communities and amongst professionals from health, education, police, social care and prosecutors.

"A high profile awareness raising campaign is essential to make communities aware of the consequences of practicing FGM and that it is not cultural but criminal. The campaign should aim to empower girls and young women giving them confidence to report FGM.

"Professionals must be given all the necessary information about FGM to enable them to act."

*More...*

In its report published on July 3 2014 the UK Home Affairs Committee found:

### **Prosecuting FGM**

- A number of successful prosecutions would send a clear message to those involved that FGM is taken with the utmost seriousness in the UK and will be punished accordingly. There should be an extension to the right to anonymity to include victims of FGM to aid prosecution.
- The good example of France should be emulated and there is a case for a system that empowers medical professionals to make periodic FGM assessments where a girl is identified as being at high risk.

### **Professionals in all sectors should ensure the safeguarding of at-risk girls**

- The Multi-Agency Guidelines on FGM should be placed on a statutory footing to provide a stronger incentive for the provision of training on FGM to all those who need it.
- The inclusion of mandatory questioning on FGM for antenatal booking interviews and at GP registration, and changes to the Personal Child Health Record/Red Book to refer explicitly to FGM.
- Requiring all schools to provide training on FGM in the remaining in-service training days in 2014 and head teachers to read guidance or face funding penalties.

### **Changes to the law on FGM**

- The introduction of FGM protection orders similar to those which exist for forced marriage.
- Making the failure to report child abuse a criminal offence if other measures to increase the level of reporting are not effective in the next 12 months.

### **Better services for women and girls living with FGM**

- The provision of better services for women and girls affected by FGM including refuge shelters for those at risk

The IAWP has members in 69 countries and is committed to further enhancing its members' skills through professional development, training, recognition, mentoring, networking and peer support. Visit [www.iawp.org](http://www.iawp.org)

For more information on the UK Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons report, Female Genital Mutilation: The Case for a National Action Plan visit: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmhaff/201/201.pdf>

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