



STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF AFRICA (COTLA), AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS NETWORK (AWLN) NIGERIA CHAPTER AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF WOMANIFESTO, ON THE REPEAL OF THE WOMEN'S AMENDMENT ACT (2015) PROHIBITING FGM IN THE GAMBIA

The Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA) has followed and noted with grave concern, recent developments in The Gambia regarding the Private Member's Bill to repeal the Women's Amendment Act (2015) prohibiting female genital mutilation (FGM).

Together with the African Women Leaders' Network (AWLN) Nigeria Chapter, and a coalition of over 500 women's rights groups and activists in Nigeria under the auspices of Womanifesto, COTLA **stands in absolute solidarity with human rights actors in The Gambia calling on the Government to uphold and maintain the existing ban on FGM.**

Data from the United Nations show that over 200 million women and girls globally¹ have experienced female genital mutilation, with Africa accounting for 144 million girls² who have undergone the practice. As leaders whose jurisdiction crosses both religious and cultural domains, we vehemently reject the position of the Private Member's Bill and echo the voices of our sisters and brothers in The Gambia reiterating that no holy text provides any justification for female genital mutilation. In fact, both Islam and Christianity uphold the sanctity of the human body – opposing harm to the body – we recall that this was a basis for the 2015 ban on FGM and therefore **use this medium to underscore the absence of scriptural ground for the practice of female genital mutilation. FGM is not a religious obligation.**

In 2015, The Gambia became a shining example of leadership in Africa by putting a ban on FGM which has been categorically proven to have no health benefits whatsoever³. In fact, this practice is responsible for countless deaths, irreversible and serious health complications for women and girls. Repealing this ban would not only make The Gambia the first country in the world to do so but would also be in direct contradiction to The Gambia's commitments and ratification of several global instruments including the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)* which explicitly calls for an end to FGM.

¹ [FAQs – Female Genital Mutilation, UN Women 2024](#)

² [Female Genital mutilation, UNICEF 2024](#)

³ [Female Genital Mutilation, WHO 2024](#)



In line with the overwhelming calls from an inter-generational movement of women's rights organisations, religious groups, civil society, development partners and activists, **we appeal to the Gambian government to keep its promise to uphold human rights for all its people. FGM is a violation of human rights.**

As custodians of culture and religion, we acknowledge the important role women and girls play in our communities – a role that can only be fulfilled if they have full access to their human rights, free from FGM. **We acknowledge the many positive practices that do uphold moral standards and promote good societal values, female genital mutilation however, is not one of them.**

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SIGNED:

Council for Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA)
African Women Leaders' Network (AWLN)
Womanifesto
9jafeminista
Abiodun Essiet Initiative for Girls
Above Whispers Foundation
Action Aid Nigeria
ACTS Generation GBV
Ade Grange Child Foundation
ADEM Community Human Development Foundation
Adinya Arise Foundation (AAF)
Advocate for Health and Development Initiative
African Women's Initiative (AWI)
Ajegunle Community Project
Ajoke Ayisat Afolabi Foundation
Alliances for AFAica (AfA)
Amazing Grace Inspirations
Aminchi Women Cooperative Society
Amnesty International Nigeria
ARDA Development Communication Inc.
Arise Nigerian Woman Foundation.
ASWHAN
ATATA Development and Empowerment Foundation (ADEF)
Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (NCAA)
Association of Nigeria Women's Business Network (ANWBN)
Association of Women in Trade and Agriculture (AWITA)
AWEP
AWFAN
FEBWE



FEDAN
BLECCA Foundation
Bring Back Our Girls
Briskila Emefesi Women Foundation (BEWOF)
Baobab for Women's Human Rights
Cece Yara Foundation
Cedar Seed Foundation
CEE-HOPE Nigeria
Center for Economic Empowerment and Gender Activities (CEEGA)
Centre for Alternative Development and Self-Enhancement (CEADESE NG)
Centre for Health and Development in Africa (CHEDA)
Centre for Nonviolence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN)
Centre for Peace Education and Community Development
Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN)
Change Managers International Network
Center for Women's Health and Information
Centre for Media and Development Communications
Civil Resource Development and Documentation Center (CIRDDOC)
Citizenship and Human Development Initiative
Charity Women Spring of Salvation
Chedal Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society
Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative (CCAPI)
Choung-Dung Women Association.
Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS)
Christian Women in Nigerian Politics
Citizens Center for Integrated Development and Social Rights (CCIDESOR)
Community and Youth Development
Community Education Advancement of Peace and Development Initiative (CEAPDI)
Community Initiative for Healthy and Peaceful Society
Community Life Project (CLP)
Community Rescue Initiative (CRI)
Community Women Initiatives (CWI)
Country Associates Network (CAN)
Courageous People Health and Development Initiative (CPHDL)
Crestville Development Foundation (CDF)
CWEMA
Daria Media Foundation (DMF)
Development in Practice Gender and Entrepreneurial Initiative (DIPGEI)
Diaspora Womanifesto2019
Dinidari Foundation (DF)
Dorothy Njemanze Foundation (DNF)
Dream Alive Women and Orphans Support Foundation (DAWOS Foundation)



Dr. Oby Ezekwesili
Echoes of Women in Africa Initiatives
Edo Women's Development Initiative
Education As A Vaccine (EVA)
EiE Nigeria
Emerge Women (EW)
Empowerment and Action Research Centre (EARC)
Equality Through Education Foundation (ETEF)
Equity Advocates/ The Woman Today Newspaper
FACICP Disability Plus
FAME Foundation
Federation of Informal Workers of Nigeria (FIWON)
Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN)
Federation of Paralegal Network (FEDPAN)
Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)
Fembridge Development Initiative (FEDI)
FIDA Nigeria
First Future Leadership
FOMWAN
Forward in Action for Education, Poverty and Malnutrition (FACE-PAM)
FRED
FEDAN
Gender Action Awareness Trust
Gender and Constitution Reform Network (GECORN)
Gender and Development Action (GADA)
Gender and Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative (GERI)
Gender Awareness Trust (GAT)
Gender Development Initiative
Gender Equality Center
Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre
Gender Technical Unit (GTU)
Gender Strategy Advancement International (GSAI)
Girl Child Advocacy and Education Initiatives
Girl Child Africa
Girl Child Education, Care & Rehabilitation
Girl Education Rehabilitation and Care (GERAC)
Girls Power Initiative (GPI)
Global Hope for Women and Children Foundation (GLOHWOC)
Green Spring Development Initiative
Gender Awareness Trust (GAT)
Gender and Constitution Reform Network (GECORN)
Habiba Dangana (Hadis) Foundation



Heal Disability Initiative
Health Education and Human Rights Advocacy Initiative
Health Reform Foundation Of Nigeria (HERFON)
HEIR Women Development (HWD)
Help Initiative for Social Justice & Humanitarian Development
Hope for New Life (HNL)
Iroko Charity Organisation
International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria
Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD)
Inter Africa Committee (IAC)
Inter Gender Peace Foundation (IGPF)
International Action Network on Small Arms Women Network (IANSA)
International Federation of Women Lawyers (Fida Nigeria)
International Hairstylists, Barber and Body Therapists (IHSTOBAN)
International Society of Media in Public Health (ISMPPH)
International Women Communication Centre (IRIAD)
Iyanwura Children Care Foundation (ICCF)
Jamatul Nasir Islam, Women Wing
Jana Health Foundation (JHF)
Julie Oyegun
Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP)
Justice Development and Peace Mission (JDPM)
KMashi Gamji Women
Kebetkache Women Development And Resources Centre
Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND)
Kungiyar Tallafin Mata Development Initiative (KTMDI)
League of Queens International Empowerment (LQIE)
League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV)
LEDAP
Lift Initiative
League of Queens International Empowerment
Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women Initiative (LACVAW)
MBULA Women Association
Media & Teens Network
Media Concern Initiative for Women and Children
Media Concern Initiative (MediaCon) for Women and Children
MODAC
Mothers United and Mobilised (MUMs)
More Women in Politics
My Voice My Future NGO
Nasrul – Lahi-L- Faith Society (NASFAT)
NAWE



NNEW

NAWORG

Nigerian Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ)

National Centre for Women Development

National Council of Women Societies (NCWS)

NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women

Neighbourhood Care-Well Foundation

Network of Reproductive Health Journalists of Nigeria, NRHJN

Next Initiative for Gender Actions (NIGA)

NEWA

NGAS Women Farmers' Cooperative Society

Nigeria Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ)

Nigeria For Women Project

Nigeria Labour Congress, Women Committee

Nigerian Express

Nigerian Women Politics Forum

Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NTWF)

Ogayem Merciful Care and Support Initiatives (OMCSI)

Ogun Women Alive

Okwuzi Women Forum

Olive Community Development Initiatives

Onomese Foundation

Open Arms Initiative for Sustainable Development (OPAISD)

Osi Joe Touching Lives Initiative

Ovie Brume Foundation

Partners West Africa

Peasant Dragnet

Princess Olufemi-Kayode

Proactive Gender Initiative (PGI)

Project Alert on Violence Against Women

Ray of Hope Community Foundation

Relief Development Initiative Kaduna

Responsible Citizenship and Human Development Initiative

Sesor Empowerment Foundation

She Forum Africa

Safe Space Initiative

Save a Child Lend a Hand Foundation

Sheforshe Africa Initiative

She Mentors Initiative

Shout Global Health

Small-scale Women Farmers Organization of Nigeria (SWOFON)

South- South Professional Women Association.



Stand to End Rape (STER)
Stephanie Peace Building Development Foundation
Support For Needy Children and Women Initiative (SUNCHI)
TechHerNG
THR Media
The Inclusion Project (TIP)
The Priceless Jewels Foundation
THR Media - HERFESSIONS INITIATIVE
Tonia Bruised but Not Broken Foundation
Transformation and Development Center (TDC)
Transition Monitoring Group
Tunde & Friends Foundation (TAFF)
UC Women Commission
UTO Foundation
Vision Spring Initiatives (VSI)
Voice of Ogun Women (VOW)
West African Network for Peace
WEWENETWORK AFRIQUE
WEPDN
Widows Development Organization (WIDO)
Woman-Being Concern Nigeria (WBC)
Women's Leadership Group (WLG)
Women & Youth Awareness Empowerment Network (WOYAEN)
Women Advocacy, HIV Prevention and Other Diseases (WAHPOD)
Women AT Risk International Foundation (WARIF)
Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC)
Women Aid Collective (WACOL)
Women in Mining
Women and Youth Empowerment for Advancement and Health Initiative
Women Youth and Children Upliftment Foundation (WYCUT)
Women Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)
Women education advocacy and development Initiatives (WEADI)
Women Empowerment and Initiative Development
Women Empowerment and Reproductive Health Centre (WERHC)
Women Empowerment Education and Peace Building Initiative (WEPBI)
Women Environmental Programme (WEP)
Women Farmers Alliance (WFA)
Women for Peace and Gender Equality Initiative (WOPEGEE)
Women for Women International (W4WI)
Women Foundation Initiative (WFI)
Women Foundation of Nigeria (WFN)



Women in Action for Positive Development and Gender Enhancement Center
(WAPGADEC)

Former Women Action Organization (WAO)

Women in Africa Initiative (WIAI)

Women in Agriculture (WIA)

Women in Mining (WIM)

Women in Politics Forum (WiPF)

Women Information Network (WINET)

Women Initiative for Democracy and Empowerment (WIDE)

Women Law and Development Initiative (WOLDI)

Women Law Development Center of Nigeria (WLDCN)

Women Lead Agric (WLA)

Women League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Women of Vision Development Initiative

Women Protection Organization (WOPO)

Women Wing of The Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN)

Women, Infants and Children Care Initiative (WICCI)

Women, Youths and Children Advancement Program

Women Optimum Development Foundation-WODEF

Women Right to Education Programme (WREP)

Women's Crisis Centre Owerri

Women's Rights and Health Project

Women's Rights and Health Project (WRAHP)

Working Moms Africa (WMA)

Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)

Women Initiative on Climate change

Women in Politics Forum (WIPF)

Women in Management Buisness and Public Service (WIMBIZ)

WISCAR

Women Democracy Network Africa – Nigeria

WomenPreneurs (AWEBO)

Yiaga Africa

Youth Future Savers Initiative (YFSI)

Zonta International Club of Lagos 1

50MAWSP

100 Women Lobby Group (100WLG)

END