

## **Input of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation to the UN Secretary General's 2019 Reports on ending violence against women, trafficking women and girls, and FGM:**

1. The issues of advancement of women and promoting their rights in general and particularly ending violence against women, combatting trafficking of women and girls, and FGM/cutting are high on the list of priorities for the OIC. The paramount importance of these issues was stated in unequivocal terms in the OIC Charter, OIC's 2025 Program of Action and OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW).
2. The OIC-2025 Programme of Action outlines a set of goals to combat and eliminate all forms of violence against women and trafficking. These goals are:
  - 2.13.1.4 Developing and improving legislation and policies on violence against women, early and forced marriage, HIV and trafficking in human beings.
  - 2.13.6 Develop appropriate legislative and administrative measures to fight against violence against women
  - 2.13.6.1 Improving policies related to gender, domestic violence, child abuse, harassment and all other forms of exploitation and human trafficking.
3. The Revised OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women (OPAAW), which provides an all-encompassing road map for comprehensive empowerment of the women and girls, clearly spells out elimination of FGM as one of its aims and objectives to be pursued by the Member States. Besides, OPAAW implementation plan, establishes specific linkages with CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action for combating all forms of gender-based violence, human trafficking and other harmful traditional practices against women and girls, including deprivation of opportunities and full enjoyment of their rights through preventive measures and provision of rehabilitation to victims and punishment of perpetrators. Also, provides means to enhancing institutional capacities of governmental institutions and civil society organizations to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women at the local and national level.
4. The OPAAW document explicitly highlights goals related to the relevant UN Resolutions. Some of these are highlighted below.<sup>1</sup>
  - Objective 6: Protection of Women from Violence: Combating all forms of gender-based violence, human trafficking and other harmful traditional practices against women and girls.
  - Objective 6/A: Combating all forms of violence against women and girls including deprivation of opportunities and full enjoyment of their rights through preventive measures and provision of rehabilitation to victims and punishment of perpetrators.

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<sup>1</sup> The OPAAW document and full list of objectives and sub-objectives related to "Violence against Women (A/RES/73/148)", "Trafficking of Women and Girls " (A/RES/73/146) and "Female Genital Mutilation (A/RES/73/149)" can be accessed through the following link. <https://www.sesric.org/files/OPAAW.PDF>

- Objective 6/B: Encouraging the adoption of national measures, policies, strategies and legislation to protect women from all forms of violence and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women, domestic violence and crimes against women.
  - Objective 6/G: Contributing to eradication of all harmful practices, in particular, female genital mutilation through strong political support and involvement of religious and community leaders.
5. Recognizing that the violence against women is a violation of human rights, OIC Member States in collaboration with the treaty bodies and UN specialized entities continue to pursue systematic and culturally sensitive comprehensive policies to educate and raise awareness among all factions of societies on the negative implications of all harmful practices, including FGM, as well as to promote the empowerment of women in all walks of life to deal with the root causes of violence, discrimination and abuse; in this regard, the OIC Member States have made concerted efforts to pursue strategies involving rights-based advocacy as well as to employ legislative tools to criminalize FGM and other forms of sexual harassment and violence.
  6. The Forty-Sixth Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), (Session: 50 Years Of Islamic Cooperation: roadmap for prosperity and development), held in Abu Dhabi, State of the United Arab Emirates on 1-2 March 2019, through Resolution no. 4/46-CUL on Social and Family issues, urged Member States, to take appropriate measures to prevent and criminalize all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, underage marriage and FGM as well as to make the necessary efforts to exonerate Islam from false claims linked to all forms of violence against women. Also, urged Member States' parliaments to pass necessary laws to combat trafficking, abuse of women, and other forms of violence against them; (<https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=4456&refID=1250>);
  7. In the framework of its joint action, the OIC has undertaken various initiatives, measures and steps to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Among the measures taken in order to implement the UN General Assembly related resolutions ([A/RES/73/148](#)), ([A/RES/73/146](#)) and ([A/RES/73/149](#)), covering the period 1 August 2018 to date, include the following:
    - 1) Organizing the seventh Women Ministerial Conference (Session of "Women Empowerment in Member States: Challenges and Prospects" ), on 30 November -1 December 2018 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, which adopted Ouagadougou Declaration and several resolutions including on women's political, economic and social empowerment; on empowering refugee and displaced women; on protecting women from all forms of violence and discrimination; and on strengthening the role of women in conflict resolution and international cooperation in this regard. The Conference also, urged the Member States to combat FGM through activating criminalization legislation, launching community awareness programs on its damaging effects and emphasizing the

necessity to tighten control and sanctions on those who perform FGM practices (<https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=4426&refID=1249>).

- 2) In addition, OIC organized a high-level discussion on the issues related to women empowerment during the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in 2018, 2019, with the participation of the Ministers in charge of women in OIC Member States
- 3) The establishment of the OIC Prize for Women's Achievements with the objective of supporting the efforts aimed at protecting women and combating all forms of gender-based violence, human trafficking and other such practices that are harmful to women and girls; to raise the capacity of civil society organizations working in the field of combatting violence against women at the local, national and regional levels; and that women have access to humanitarian assistance during wars, disasters and conflicts. The ceremony for the first group of winners was held in 2018 at the Ministerial Conference in Burkina Faso.
- 4) The OIC General Secretariat and SESRIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries) organized a Training Session on 17-19 September 2019 in Ankara, Turkey, to provide training to the OIC Member States' relevant Ministries, agencies and experts on how to measure and submit progress reports on the implementation of OPAAW. Representatives of 18 OIC Member States and relevant OIC institutions attended this Training Session.
- 5) Creating an online OPAAW Survey and National Progress Report: As a follow up to the OPAAW Training Workshop, and to track the progress in the implementation of the OPAAW, SESRIC created an online Survey and produced a guideline document for the submission of National Progress Reports (NPR) for the utilization of the OIC Member States. As of 30 April 2020, 21 OIC Member States filled in the Survey and six Member States submitted their NPR. The data and information collected from the Surveys and the NPRs will be analyzed and utilized in the upcoming OIC Women Report 2020 to assess the extent to which OIC Member States have implemented the measures and targets in the OPAAW, including the specific actions they have taken on Violence against Women (A/RES/73/148), Trafficking of Women and Girls (A/RES/73/146) and Female Genital Mutilation (A/RES/73/149).
- 6) Presentation of the OIC Women and Development Report 2018: Enhancing Women Entrepreneurship for Development: As a demographic group, women are one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups owing to the gender disparity and violence against women in many OIC Member States. The OIC Women and Development Report 2018 produced by the SESRIC specifically addresses issues of violence against women and female genital mutilation (FGM) of women in OIC Member States. The report presents statistical data and measures to prevent violence against women and the prevalence of FGM. In 2018, violence against

women<sup>2</sup> in OIC Member States stood at an average of 34.4%, recording the highest average when compared to other country groups. Similarly, FGM prevalence amongst girls and women were 48.1% in the OIC-group while the world average was recorded at 45.4%.

- 7) In this regard, the OIC Women report serves as a technical background document for the biennial Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of OIC Member States. The report provides policy suggestions for overcoming specific challenges faced by women in the OIC Member countries by utilizing the latest statistics from a wide range of national and international sources such as UN Women, OECD, UNDP and World Bank.
- 8) Elaboration of an OIC Gender Policy to be presented to the eighth session of the Women Ministerial Conference to be held probably at the end of 2020 in Cairo, Republic Arab of Egypt
- 9) Adoption of the OIC Strategy for the Empowerment of the Marriage and Family Institution (2020-2025): During the First OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development in 2019, OIC Member States mutually agreed upon the adoption of the OIC Strategy for the Empowerment of the Family and Marriage Institution (2020-2025). The Strategy (will be upload on the OIC website soon) addresses violence against women in the family, prevention of FGM and trafficking of women and girls. The Strategy outlines concrete actions to deal with these challenges in the Islamic world. Strategic objective relating to the relevant resolutions are as follows:
  - Strategic Goal 3.2: Enforce efficient and preventive measures to criminalize domestic violence and stop all forms of violence in the family especially against women and children such as; physical and sexual abuse, child marriages, sexual harassment, physical and psychological abuse and other forms of violence. This might include develop specific legislations that prevent harmful practices and raise awareness about the prohibition of domestic violence by Islam, legal provisions and social norms. Ensure enforcement of legal provisions and policy measures adopted against domestic violence.
  - Strategic Goal 3.3: Establish units/ centres to help with combating violence in family through raising awareness on all forms of violence and develop training programmes for judicial and security personnel on how to recognize and effectively treat victims of domestic violence.
  - Strategic Goal 6.11: Use all Media to improve delivery of the Family Strategy contents and strategies focusing on issues such as Women, family stability, peace and security, women rights and responsibilities, women empowerment and participation, women work fluid eco-system, women displacement and migration, violence against women and girls/female genital mutilation,

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<sup>2</sup> :Prevalence of violence against women in the lifetime indicator is the percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their life

- Strategic Goal 3.10: Address the root causes of divorce, physical abuse, violence, drug abuse, human trafficking and prostitution; stressing on factors such as unemployment, ignorance, lack of education, poverty, lack of dialogue and communication in family...etc
- 10) The OIC-IPHRC (Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission) has proposed revisions to the OIC Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam to bring it in line with the universal human rights instruments. The proposed Covenant urges the Member States to “undertake all effective and appropriate measures to eradicate unhealthy practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation-FGM”. The revised Covenant will serve as a normative framework for the Member States to adopt legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child, including girl child from all forms of torture or other cruel inhumane or degrading treatment in all circumstances and conditions, including all forms of physical or mental violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, pornography, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, abduction, smuggling, kidnapping, sale of, or trafficking for any exploitative purpose or in any form, by any person including parents or legal guardians. It also suggested legislative means to prevent child marriage. The adoption of the revised Covenant and its translation into legislative means would significantly reinforce the ongoing efforts;
  - 11) The OIC has finalized revision of its ‘Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam’ with specific clauses for protection of rights of women including protection ‘against all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and harmful traditional practices;
  - 12) OIC-IPHRC has published a position paper on the topic of ‘Human Trafficking in OIC countries’ with special emphasis on women and children to create awareness about the issue. The report also suggests policy choices to combat this phenomenon (<https://www.oic-iphrc.org/en/data/docs/studies/358156.pdf>).
  - 13) The World Bank Group in its report titled “World Bank. Compendium of International and National Legal Frameworks on Female Genital Mutilation, February 2018, World Bank” has provided list of countries which include at least 25 Member States where there is a relevant legislation which criminalize the act of FGM in one form or the other. The latest addition to this tally is the landmark move by the transitional government of the Republic of Sudan to criminalize the FGM (<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/156881580972545144/pdf/Compendium-of-International-and-National-Legal-Frameworks-on-Female-Genital-Mutilation-Fourth-Edition.pdf> );
  - 14) Awareness campaigns: H.E OIC Secretary General issued on several occasions press releases and statements calling on OIC Member States, NGO and Civil Society organizations to intensify their efforts on ending violence against women, trafficking of women and girls, and combatting FGM/cutting.

- 15) Organizing a Workshop on 19-20 January 2020 on the Promotion of the Concept of Family Bank (Islamic Microfinance) in G5 Sahel Countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), in order to contribute to the flow of financial resources from the informal and public sectors to the target groups (especially displaced women and girls) for economic development.
- 16) OIC General Secretariat in collaboration with the Arab Republic of Egypt and UN Women organized a round table discussion at the ministerial level on 17 June 2019 in Cairo, on “Women political, economic and social empowerment” with the effective participation of the Ministers in charge of women in the OIC Member States and the African Union Commission. The Session included discussing issues on economic empowerment of women and financial inclusion and access to resources, the role of women in combating extremism, terrorism and gender-based violence, and the participation of women in decision-making process. It also provided an opportunity to exchange good practices and experiences in those issues
- 17) OIC General Secretariat and OIC relevant organs and institutions participated in several international and regional seminars and conferences on the subject of ending violence against women, trafficking women and girls, and on FGM/cutting.
- 18) On the other hand, the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), an OIC Subsidiary organ prepared studies and adopted several resolutions (Fatwas) clarifying the position of Islam and OIC towards these practices. They were compiled in a working paper titled “The role of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy in the fight against all forms of violence against women and the family in the light of Islamic principles: The marriage of minors and female genital mutilation”.