



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE FOR  
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 8 February 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I am speaking on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, San Marino, Switzerland and Norway.

On Tuesday, 6 February, we observed the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, a day that has now reached its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Every year, around three million girls, also in our region, are at risk of female genital mutilation.

The negative health effects of the practice are many, including problems related to intercourse, pregnancy and childbirth. At worst, the effects can be fatal. The practice violates a girl's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death. It is a form of violence against women and girls, harming both physically and psychologically, and embedding gender inequality and discriminatory norms. It is also a violation of the rights of children. We must do more to eliminate female genital mutilation; our failure to adopt a decision against violence against women at last year's Ministerial Council being one indication.

Ending female genital mutilation is a complex issue. The international regulatory framework is only one part of the effort: implementation is key. To that extent, Parliaments must adopt clear and unambiguous prohibitions and oversee their implementation. National authorities must adopt strategies, policies and action plans to prevent and eradicate female genital mutilation and ensure that victims and survivors of these practices receive the appropriate medical care and are not kept out of school. Civil society, health practitioners, religious leaders and politicians must work to raise awareness about the harmful consequences of female genital mutilation and contribute to upholding the rights of women and girls in practice.

The elimination of female genital mutilation is one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, which overall are to be reached by 2030. We call on participating States to make all efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation within this timeframe. We have 12 years to reach this goal.

Thank you.