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COI QUERY RESPONSE

SAUDI ARABIA - INFORMATION ON PREVALENCE OF FGM ON YOUNG GIRLS

CE Noticias Financieras in February 2025 mentioned that: “An updated UNICEF report estimates that more than 230 million women and girls in 31 countries have been affected by female genital mutilation, a figure that has grown in recent years due to new data collection. The 15% increase in the global figure reflects the expansion of FGM in places such as Colombia, the Philippines, Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia.”¹

The *MENAFN* in February 2025 notes that: “The research follows up on the group's 2020 report that documented how the extent of FGM/C was being woefully underestimated globally. Since then, FGM/C has been identified in local communities in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, and Vietnam, and further evidence has been gathered in Colombia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates.”²

The *Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany)* in November 2024 reported that: “The government's official interpretation of Sharia law prohibits FGM (female genital mutilation) but up to 18% of women are reportedly affected by the practice.”³

An article published by *Research Gate* in November 2024 states that: “Another study conducted in Hali, Al Qunfudhah Governorate, Saudi Arabia, was based on a community household survey to detect the prevalence of FGM in females who are ≤18 years old. The study concluded that FGM is still rooted in the culture of people in rural and semi-urban areas. Based on the Hali official map, the region was divided into 30 clusters. The survey was directed to 12 houses in each cluster and covered 218 females. The results showed that the majority of females had their circumcision performed at seven years of age or less (59.4%). Female circumcision was mostly done by doctors

¹ CE Noticias Financieras (25 February 2025) More than 230 million women underwent female genital mutilation since 2020 in 94 countries, report finds

² MENAFN (25 February 2025) New Report Finds Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting In 94 Countries

³ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany) (25 November 2024) Country report 65 - Saudi Arabia: Human rights situation, p.12

(91.4%). Circumcision was less common in females whose parents had better education and good income and were unrelated and whose mothers got married at an older age. However, the differences were statistically insignificant.”⁴

This document further notes that: “It was thought that FGM is not common in Saudi Arabia; however, recent studies show that it is prevalent in Jeddah and Hali in the western region of the country.”⁵

The *US Department of State* Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in April 2024 mentioned that: “The official government interpretation of sharia prohibited the practice; however, a 2020 study by Equality Now, the most recent available, indicated up to 18 percent of women reported having undergone some type of FGM/C.”⁶

The *Bertelsmann Stiftung* in March 2024 points out that: “About one-fifth of Saudi women are believed to have undergone circumcision or female genital mutilation, a practice conducted reportedly often in combination with forced child marriage.”⁷

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⁴ Research Gate (21 November 2024) *Female Genital Mutilation in Saudi Arabia: A Systematic Review*

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ US Department of State (22 April 2024) *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Saudi Arabia*

⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung (19 March 2024) *BTI 2024 Country Report Saudi Arabia*

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