



## FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING AND FORCED MARRIAGE: SERVICES AND ADVOCACY

### Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

FGM/C is a term used to describe practices that involve the complete or partial removal of, or other injury to, the external female genitalia. These procedures have no health benefits, and the United Nations and the World Health Organization classify FGM/C as a human rights violation.

### Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage which takes place without the full and free consent of one or both parties. It may be a threatened marriage, or one that has already taken place. Forced marriages can happen to people of any gender, age, religion, cultural background, or economic status.

### Intersection of FGM/C and Forced Marriage

While not all individuals who face forced marriage are also at risk of FGM/C, and not all survivors of FGM/C will experience forced marriage, the two harms can intersect in several ways:

- FGM/C is often considered a prerequisite for getting girls ready to marry — so risk/experience of FGM/C may also indicate risk of future forced marriage.
- Likewise, forced marriage can at times precipitate FGM/C — some individuals may be at imminent risk of FGM/C in preparation for a marriage that they do not want.
- A victim or individual at risk of forced marriage may have already experienced FGM/C in her lifetime and require specialist health services with respect to medical or mental health problems she's experiencing due to the FGM/C. A survivor of FGM/C may be in a forced marriage and in need of specialized social or legal services with respect to abuse or other problems she's experiencing in the marriage or for help to leave the marriage.
- In the United States, both types of harm often have an overseas dynamic. Individuals at risk may be taken overseas for the purposes of FGM/C, forced marriage, or both, making it difficult to access help - particularly for those under 18.

### The Tahirih Justice Center can assist individuals facing FGM/C and Forced Marriage

Tahirih provides free and confidential legal and social services to women and girls facing gender based violence. We can help with:

#### Immigration Legal Assistance:

- Our offices in [Greater D.C.](#), [Baltimore](#), [Houston](#) and [San Francisco](#) provide free legal services to immigrant women and girls who are at risk of or survivors of FGM/C, forced marriage and other forms of violence.
- Clients receiving immigration representation from Tahirih may also be eligible for [social services](#) and [family law services](#).
- Individuals that wish to access Tahirih's services should contact their local office for a screening call (screening times for offices are listed below; to contact our new San Francisco office, please email [SanFrancisco@tahirih.org](mailto:SanFrancisco@tahirih.org)).

#### Forced Marriage Protection

- Our [Forced Marriage Initiative \(FMI\)](#) provides support to individuals from anywhere in the United States that are facing forced marriages, either domestically or overseas.
- Direct legal representation and case management is available to individuals in our local service areas.
- The FMI also provides [technical assistance](#) to service providers working with forced marriage survivors. We can assist with [risk assessment](#), [safety planning](#), [relocation](#) and preparing for or avoiding [imminent travel overseas](#).
- On a case-by-case basis, the FMI may be able to help individuals from the U.S. that are facing FGM/C even when there is no forced marriage threat. Where we cannot directly assist, we connect service seekers with other specialist agencies.

#### Greater D.C.

571-282-6161  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tues

#### Baltimore:

410-999-1900  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tues

#### Houston

713-496-0100  
9 - 5:30 CST Mon-Fri

#### Forced Marriage Initiative

Phone: 571-282-6161  
Email: [FMI@tahirih.org](mailto:FMI@tahirih.org)