

A Kenyan doctor is seeking to legalize female genital mutilation

By Bukola Adebayo, CNN

Updated 1954 GMT (0354 HKT) October 25, 2019



(CNN)A female doctor in Kenya wants female genital mutilation to be decriminalized.

Tatu Kamau is asking Kenya's courts to allow women above the age of 18 to be able to practice female genital mutilation (FGM), saying they have a right to choose what they do to their bodies at that age.

She wants the Kenyan government to annul the [Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2011](#) and the board set up to enforce the law disbanded.

FGM is widely condemned in the country and across [parts of Africa](#) but Kamau argues in a 2017 petition filed against the government, that it is an age-old Kenyan tradition and that an outright ban infringes on a woman's right to exercise her cultural beliefs.

Kamau is representing herself in the case before the Nairobi High Court. She told judges on Thursday that the term mutilation is "offensive" and denigrates the cultural significance of the practice.

"Women who took their daughters for circumcision were not taking them there to destroy them. Those children were not thrown away afterward, they were celebrated as respected members of the society. To use the word in our context suggests that it is malicious and that we are intentionally damaging our females. To me, it is very wrong," [Kamau said](#).

She is pushing for medical workers and "certified" traditional cutters to be allowed to circumcise women.

"We could have had limitations of where you can do it, when, who can do it for you and how ... Those things could have been controlled ... such that you have certain months of the year and that is the only time ... you can do and it can only be done by certain professionals, those are the only people who are allowed to do it," Kamau said.

Kamau declined to comment to CNN until the case is over.



Violation of women and girl's rights

FGM is **illegal** for both women and girls in Kenya, and individuals involved in the practice could spend three years in jail even if it's done outside its border.

Despite the law, many women are undergoing the cut in rural Kenya where cultural and traditional beliefs persist that FGM — the partial removal of the external female genitalia such as the clitoris or labia — reduces a woman's desire for sex.

According to the UN estimates, 21 percent of Kenyan women between the age of 15 and 49 have been cut, and at least **200 million girls and women** across 30 countries are affected by the practice.

FGM, internationally recognized as a violation of the human rights of women and girls, can cause severe bleeding and other health issues, infections, infertility and complications in childbirth, according to the World Health Organization.



To end FGM, donors must trust women working on the frontlines
<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/06/africa/ending-fgm-means-funding-women/index.html>

Anti-FGM campaigners have described Kamau's position as "outrageous" saying arguments to overturn the act erodes progress that has been made in the fight for women and girl's rights in Kenya.

"It's outrageous that a supposed doctor, who should be protecting Kenyan women and girls, is trying to put them in harm's way. Her comments suggest that she doesn't seem to understand basic medicine," said Brendan Wynne from the Five Foundation, a global partnership to end FGM.

"FGM causes lifelong damage and can kill. Let's not roll back progress at a point when Kenya is finally starting to see

some traction on this issue."

Kamau's petition has been adjourned until December.

The Kenyan teenagers tackling female genital mutilation with an app

By **Osman Mohamed Osman**, for CNN

Updated 1054 GMT (1854 HKT) August 1, 2017



The five Kenya girls, 'The Restorers', created an app called i-Cut, designed to connect girls affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to legal and medical assistance.

Story highlights

A girl forced to undergo FGM can call for help by pressing a panic button on the app

The students will be the only Africans participating in the 2017 Technovation Challenge in California

(CNN) A group of Kenyan teenagers have created an app called [i-Cut](#) to help girls affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The students, Stacy Owino, Cynthia Otieno, Purity Achieng, Mascrine Atieno and Ivy Akinyi, have named themselves '[The Restorers](#)', and they were the only Africans that participated in the 2017 [Technovation Challenge](#) in Silicon Valley in August.



Technovation



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The app will help connect affected girls to legal and medical assistance.

Girls who are forced to undergo the procedure can also alert local authorities by pressing a panic button on the app.

Despite being [illegal](#), Kenya still records a high number of FGM cases. According to a [2016 Unicef report](#), one in five girls have undergone the procedure in the east African nation.

The practice is mostly done when the girls are between the ages 10-14 years.

"This app a good way of getting people to talk about FGM," said Dorcas Adhiambo Owino, the group's mentor and Kenya's Technovation program lead.

"It is a conversation starter and that shows anyone can be involved in the fight against FGM."

The team beat nine Kenyan semi finalists to secure a spot at the 2017 Technovation Challenge held in August in California, where they met other finalists from other parts of the world and competed for a chance to win \$15,000.

Sponsored by Google, Salesforce and Adobe, Technovation challenges girls aged 10-18 to create an app that solves problems faced by their communities.