

PRESS RELEASE

Campaigners call on international community to raise their voices as 50 girls hospitalised due to FGM in Burkina Faso

Thursday 20th September 2018

Immediate Release

FORWARD, a London based African women's organisation, is outraged and deeply saddened that 50 girls have been hospitalised after being subjected to 'botched' female genital mutilation in Kaya, in Burkina Faso (West Africa).

FORWARD believes one girl undergoing this grave human rights abuse is one too many, yet in Kaya 50 girls have been hospitalised. What makes it even more disheartening is that Burkina Faso has legislation against FGM and has had since 1996 which criminalises anyone performing, arranging or otherwise aiding FGM. FORWARD knows that legislation alone will not end FGM as it is an ingrained social norm, and only through extensive community engagement and strict enforcement of existing laws will this abuse end.

In light of the need to protect girls and young women from all forms of VAWG including FGM, FORWARD calls on:
-the Burkinabe diaspora and mothers, fathers and affected communities in Burkina Faso to stand up against FGM,
-the Burkinabe government to enforce their laws and prosecute all those involved in the FGM of these 50 girls; fifty girls whose lives have been put at risk and whose futures may be filled with physical and mental health issues because of this.

FORWARD needs the international community to understand that FGM does not just affect girls in 'far away' countries like Burkina Faso, but also affects women and girls right here in the UK. This shocking report is a reminder to governments, professionals and communities that we need to continue efforts to ensure more girls do not undergo a similar fate and that adequate services are provided for those who have already been affected.

On International Day for the Girl Child 2018 (October 11th) let us all recommit ourselves to take an action [no matter how small] to protect girls from FGM worldwide.

To find out more about the work of FORWARD visit: www.forwarduk.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

- **For media enquiries please contact:** Naomi Reid: Naomi@forwarduk.org.uk , Tel: 020 8960 4000 (option 6)
- FORWARD is an African- led, women's rights organisation. Our work focuses on the issues of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) that impact health, dignity and wellbeing of African women and girls.
www.forwarduk.org.uk Twitter: @FORWARDUK
- FORWARD has been campaigning against FGM and other forms of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) affecting African women and girls since 1983.