

TANZANIA: Special meeting now held to prevent next FGM ritual

Daily News (26.10.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2qcEXhp>– A committee in-charge of protecting children and women in Tarime District has held a crucial meeting to deliberate on what should be done to prevent the next female genital mutilation (FGM) ritual.

The meeting of the committee was made possible through funding from Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), a non-governmental organization leading an on-going campaign against FGM and child marriage in the region.

Among others, the committee is composed of government officials from various departments entrusted to protect and safeguard children's rights.

These include gender and children's desks at police stations, the Prisons Department, the Social Welfare, Education and Community Development. There is fear that hundreds of girls will be subjected to FGM in the district in December, this year.

The committee, which also includes religious leaders, proposed several measures that will help curb FGM in the area.

Some speakers during the meeting wanted female circumcisers locally known as 'ngaribas' to be arrested and kept until January next year, when the FGM season ends.

"These 'ngaribas' and traditional leaders should be arrested and kept until January 2019 because they are known.

"Let them be arrested," suggested Ms Mariam Julius, a villager from Nyasaricho. Ms Julius and other members of the committee also wanted traditional leaders to be benched from the ongoing anti-FGM campaign in the area on grounds that the elders had been betraying them.

"Traditional leaders are the ones planning and coordinating FGM. It is time to keep them away from this campaign and instead educate girls and women. This will be helpful," the woman, who is well familiar with FGM in the area, noted. Another committee member Mwihechi Marwa said it was time the campaign involved people, who were not seeing FGM as an important culture.

"The traditional leaders cannot help because they are the ones coordinating FGM," Mr Marwa, who is the chairman fo Saved Aged People in Tarime, said.

The committee further said there would be public announcement banning FGM ceremonies in the area. Government officials in Mara Region have also blamed traditional leaders from betraying the anti-FGM campaign in the area.

“It is very unfortunate that these traditional leaders are dishonest always taking us backward. This is the truth of the matter,” Rorya District Commissioner (DC) Simon Chacha said recently.

The DC made remarks during a crucial meeting held in Tarime to deliberate on measures that they thought could this time save girls from undergoing FGM in Tarime and other parts of the region.

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