

Table of Contents

- [‘Ban FGM,’ Civil society groups demand government](#)

‘Ban FGM,’ Civil society groups demand government

By Hannah N. Geterminah

Liberian Observer (05.09.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2wOxoAb> - The leadership of the Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia has called on authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to abolish the granting of licenses to female traditional healers (Zoes) for the practice of female genital mutilation, or FGM, in the country.

FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or injuries to the female genital organ for non-medical reasons.

Recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, the practice is mostly carried out by traditional healers who often play other central roles in a community, such as attending childbirths.

But Liberia Civil Society Organization platform members, in a resolution adopted and signed by 50 delegates at the end of a two-day consultation dialogue on the United Nations Concluding Observations on Liberia, held in Kakata, Margibi County, recently demanded the inclusion of sexual reproductive health and rights awareness in schools' curriculum.

The Kakata dialogue, held on August 22-23, 2018, according to the CSO Platform's secretary general, Adama K. Dempster, was a follow-up consultation with stakeholders, sponsored by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Liberia and Technical Support from the Center for Civil and Political Rights based in Geneva.

The forum was held under the theme, "Consultation on the United Nations Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on Liberia," at its 3519th meeting held on July 23, 2018.

Delegates at the dialogue also requested the Liberian government to increase the budgetary allotments for the ministries of Education and Health, to enable them carry out sexual reproductive health and rights awareness in various schools.

Mr. Dempster, who read the group's resolution at a news conference in Monrovia on Monday, September 4, appealed to donors to fund different projects that would be formulated by advocacy around issues coming out of the concluding observation.

He assured that the CSO Platform will engage government constructively through advocacy, create awareness, and lobby to ensure implementation of all the concluding observations.

Dempster said that "there is a need to conduct a validation perception survey to understand public perception on the need to harmonize both customary and statutory laws of Liberia to conform with international human rights treaties that Liberia has signed in order to avoid conflict, and maintain the country's peace."

He then promised that CSOs shall bring together all relevant stakeholders to further discuss the concluding observations concerning the issues of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, harmful traditional practices, People Living with Disability, to agree on the best way to implement them, "because of their sensitive nature."
