

Table of Contents

- [*Queensland mum convicted over female genital mutilation procedure*](#)

Queensland mum convicted over female genital mutilation procedure

By Warren Barnsley

The Sydney Morning Herald (13.02.2019) - <https://goo.gl/VB78Yu> - A Queensland woman has been found guilty of arranging for her two daughters to have their genitals mutilated in Somalia.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, denied she had taken the girls, then aged 12 and nine, to her birth nation in April 2015 to undergo the procedure.

She was convicted by a Brisbane District Court jury on Wednesday of two counts of removing a child from the state for female genital mutilation (FGM).

The jury deliberated for about 90 minutes before reaching their verdict.

The trial heard the woman, who had undergone a similar procedure as a girl, had her daughters endure FGM a few days after arriving in Somalia.

One of the girls was called inside from playing outside her grandmother's house and had no idea what was about to happen when she had the painful procedure.

She was conscious throughout and it caused pain for days. Her sister was also subjected to the procedure, also with their mother by her side.

"(Their mother) had them in her care for the entire time. She was there when they were mutilated not long after they arrived in Somalia," crown prosecutor Dejana Kovac said.

"She extended the trip to give them time to heal before returning to Australia."

The family returned to their home seven months later. Then the girls' stepsister tipped off child safety services.

The girls told Queensland police about their experiences, leading to the charges against their mother.

Pediatrician Ryan Mills, who examined the girls, told the court the flattening of their clitoral hoods and discolouration of associated skin was "abnormal" and unlikely to be a "natural variation".

"(The abnormalities) could be explained or are consistent with, in medical terms, genital mutilation," he testified.

He said there was no therapeutic reason for the procedure.

Defence barrister Patrick Wilson said key medical evidence could have been interpreted differently by doctors not familiar with the case.

In a police interview, the woman said their trip had been to visit her mother and she'd done "nothing" in relation to a genital mutilation procedure.

Whatever had happened to the girls was "from God", she said.

Asked by Justice Leanne Clare if there was any reason why sentencing should not be passed down, the woman, through an interpreter, said she had cancer and back problems.

She was granted bail and will be sentenced at a later date.