

East and Southern Africa

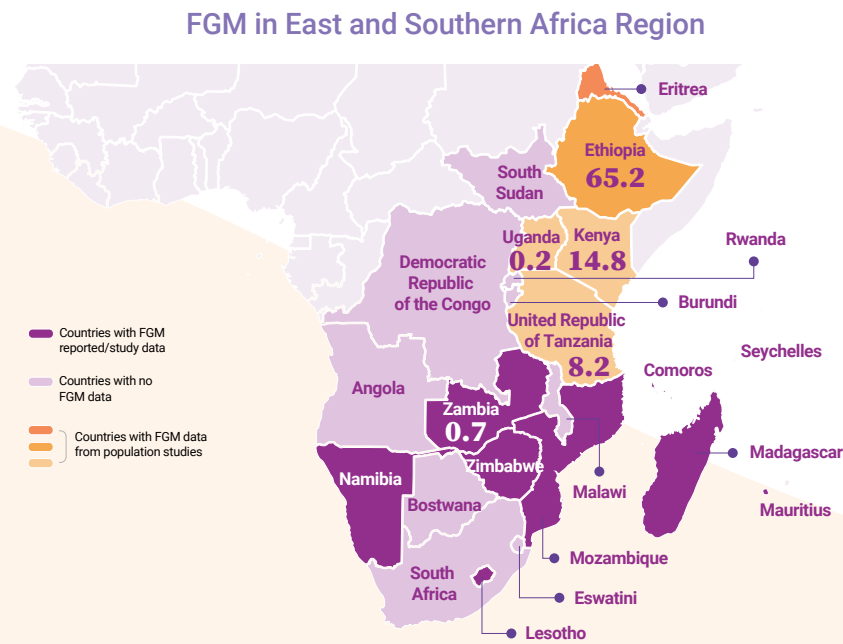
REGIONAL SNAPSHOT FOR 2024

FGM context

East and Southern Africa is home to several countries with a notable decline in female genital mutilation (FGM) prevalence over the past decade, for instance, Ethiopia (from 68 to 47 per cent), Eritrea (nearly universal to 69 per cent) and Kenya (from 13 to 9 per cent). Both Uganda (0.1 per cent) and the United Republic of Tanzania (4 per cent) maintain low FGM prevalence rates among adolescent girls (aged 15–19). However, FGM remains almost universal in Somalia,¹ at around 99 per cent for the last three decades.

Five countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) have a national multisectoral policy or strategy on FGM elimination with defined targets, allocated budgets, and monitoring and evaluation components.

Increasing calls for FGM medicalization through religious leaders (Ethiopia) or the involvement of health workers (Somalia) is of concern. Cross-border FGM practices are also problematic, especially in areas with stark differences in prevalence, such as between Uganda (which is on track to eliminate FGM by 2030) and neighbouring countries like Kenya and Sudan, where FGM remains widespread and population displacement is rising. Nine countries (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) have banned FGM. However, the alignment of FGM laws with human rights principles, law enforcement, and accountability mechanisms still requires further strengthening in the region.



Source: Latest data from DHS, MICS, other national sources, research and reports.

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Regional partners

Number	List of partners*
12	African Council of Religious Leaders, African Women Rights Advocate, Akina Mama wa Afrika, Amref Health Afrika, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, East African Community, East African Legislative Assembly, Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women, Equality Now, Global Youth Consortium Against FGM, Orchid Project, Sonke Gender Justice

Highlights of 2024 programme results

	Number of outcome documents of global and regional intergovernmental processes that integrate FGM	Target 2 Result 3	→ The African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls → The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Child Policy Framework → The African Union Accountability Mechanism on Ending Harmful Practices
	Number of peer review processes of relevant global and regional bodies and related committees that incorporate an FGM elimination progress component	Target 2 Result 3	→ Convened a strategic dialogue with the East African Council of Ministers, who committed to strengthening FGM-related intercountry coordination and collaboration including East African Community Prohibition of FGM Bill → Collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to secure political and programmatic commitments to end FGM as well as addressing the pushback against laws against FGM → Engaged with the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum to explore the integration of FGM into child marriage and gender-based violence review mechanisms

Spotlighted interventions

Engaging women-led organizations and strengthening regional networks

→ The Joint Programme regional team organized a regional workshop for 36 local women-led organizations from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Zambia. The workshop focused on gender-based violence in emergencies and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM. It facilitated peer learning, capacity-building and networking, bringing women-led organizations into a more central role in programme implementation. Moving forward, the regional team plans to scale up engagement with women-led organizations given their deep understanding of community needs and roles in sustainable, locally driven solutions to harmful practices.

Expanding and intensifying the global influence of the Joint Programme

→ A regional webinar launched a social innovation toolkit designed for young people, women and non-traditional partners. It provides practical guidance, especially for adolescents and girls to develop innovative ideas and accelerate collective efforts to end harmful practices, including FGM and child marriage. The toolkit also guides connections to grow social enterprises within and outside Africa, including with investors such as the African Development Bank, Africa Venture Philanthropy Alliance and Qhala. In tandem, a financing framework for innovation was developed to support sustainable funding models across the region. The Joint Programme sponsored a creative advocacy campaign using fortune cookie jars and playing cards to share messages on FGM and innovation. The campaign was spotlighted at the AfriLabs Annual Gathering, which had over 2,000 innovators and partners exploring solution-driven approaches to ending FGM. The “Incredible Stories” videos and a digital booklet showcased community-led innovations, and informed and inspired policymakers, funders and partners.

¹ Somalia is under the Arab States region for UNFPA and the East and Southern Africa region for UNICEF. Two regional summaries report on it.