

West and Central Africa

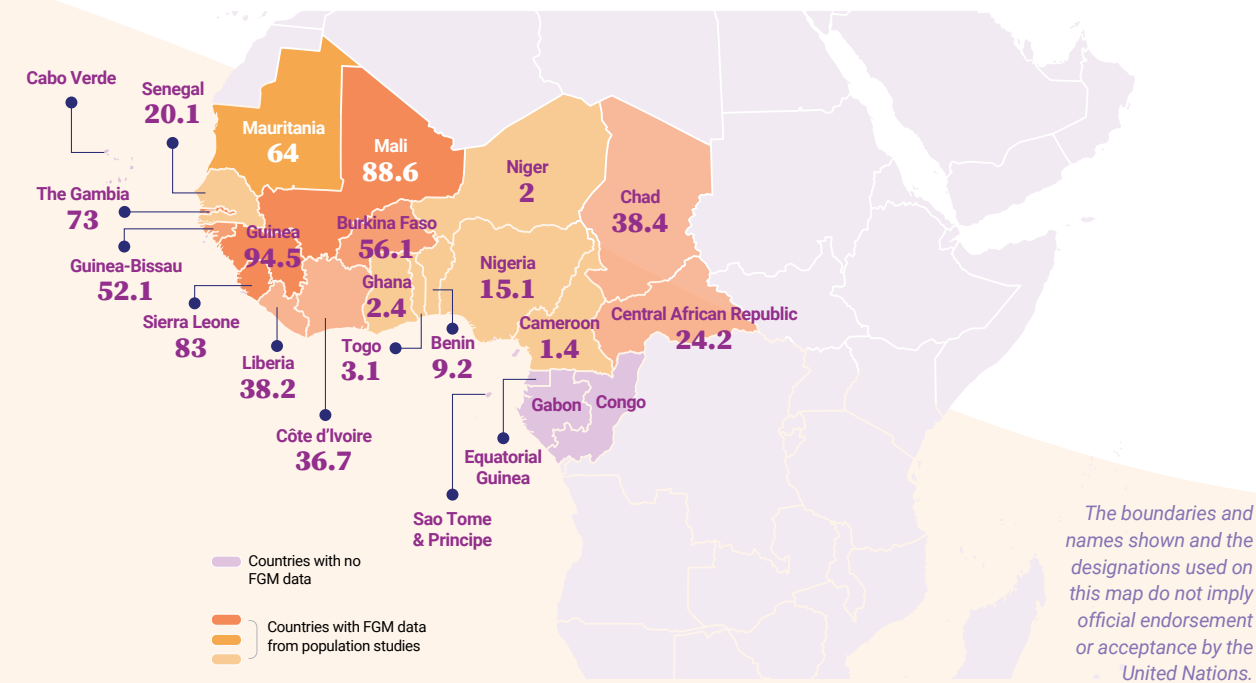
REGIONAL SNAPSHOT FOR 2024

FGM context

Almost 50 million female genital mutilation (FGM)-affected women and girls (20 per cent of the global burden) live in this region. A regional analysis of current trends in the decline of FGM prevalence among girls aged 15–19 years estimates progress would need to accelerate 10 times to reach the target of eliminating FGM by 2030.¹ The estimated acceleration pace for every country varies; for instance, the pace in Nigeria is estimated to be at least 2 times, Burkina Faso 5 times, Mauritania 20 times and Guinea 100 times.² Nevertheless, regional performance is among the best globally. Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone have shown the strongest progress in reducing FGM among girls aged 15–19. Furthermore, Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger and Togo are predicted to end FGM by 2030.

The increasingly fragile context in the region due to humanitarian, climate and economic crises and population movements may dampen FGM elimination progress. Higher numbers of FGM cases have been reported in refugee-hosting countries that have low FGM prevalence, e.g., Cabo Verde and Ghana, although improved reporting would need to be ruled out first. Twelve out of 18 (75 per cent) countries have FGM national strategies while seven out of eight (88 per cent) Joint Programme focus countries have a current national multisectoral policy or strategy on FGM elimination with defined targets, allocated budgets and M&E components. Fourteen out of 18 (78 per cent) countries have FGM laws; exceptions are Chad, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone.

FGM in West and Central Africa Region



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

Almost 50 million FGM-affected women and girls are in 18 countries in this region, 20% of the global burden

Regional partners

Number	List of partners*
3	Equality Now, Equimundo, Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend

Highlights of 2024 programme results

	Number of outcome documents of global and regional intergovernmental processes that integrate FGM	Target 2 Result 3	→ Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Review Guidance Note → Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Reporting Guidance Note → Contributed to the draft recommendations for the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, which will be launched in 2025
	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	→ Engaged with the West and Central Africa Commitment Accountability Framework's Regional Technical Working Group → Participated in the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; the the Joint Programme supported the youth consultation → The Joint Programme initiated a rapid data mapping exercise to review publicly available financial information on government programmes that respond to and prevent GBV, child marriage and FGM across West and Central Africa

Spotlighted interventions

Movement-building, expanding and intensifying Joint Programme influence, and engaging youth- and women-led organizations

→ In 2024, the region successfully countered efforts to repeal The Gambia's FGM law through strong coordination and collective efforts by Joint Programme regional teams, other UN organizations, civil society, development partners, independent experts such as the UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children, and regional mechanisms such as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, along with religious leaders. Evidence-based interventions informed by power analysis, regular social media analysis and strategic advocacy plans for civil society ensured well-aligned efforts. To prevent future backlash, seven focus countries (Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal) developed strategic advocacy plans for FGM elimination.

Diversifying funding through public financing

→ In 2024, a joint regional rapid data mapping exercise began reviewing publicly available financial information on government programmes that respond to and prevent GBV, child marriage and FGM. The objective was to identify which analytics can be produced to support regional advocacy for expanded national budgets for prevention and response services for girls and women along with technical assistance to optimize government spending. A methodology to measure public investment in GBV, child marriage and FGM services and create a financial benchmark for them will be tested in at least 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 2025.

¹ UNFPA, 2024. Level of Acceleration Needed to Achieve UNFPA Transformative Results.
² UNICEF, 2024. Female Genital Mutilation: A global concern. 2024 update.