**87% of females in Egypt aged 15 to 49 underwent FGM from 2004-2015: Unicef**

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The United Nations Children Fund (Unicef) said in its annual report on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) day that there has been an overall decline in the prevalence of FGM over the past three decades.

However, not all countries have made progress, and the pace of decline has been uneven.

Egypt was among the countries that witnessed a fast decline in the prevalence of FGM rates from 1987 to 2015. It ranked sixth among countries that practice FGM worldwide, with an overall percentage of 85% among girls and women aged between 15 to 49 years old.

“While the exact numbers of girls and women worldwide who have undergone FGM/c remains unknown, at least 200 million girls and women in 30 countries have been subjected to the practice,” the report read. The highest country of FGM prevalence presently is Somalia with 98% and many other African countries. Yemen and Iraq were among other Arab countries with a large number of FGM besides Egypt.

“In Yemen, 85% of girls experienced the practice within their first week of life,” Unicef stated.

Egypt’s Minister of Health Ahmed Emad El-Din said in an official statement Saturday that Egypt aims to completely eradicate the phenomena of FGM in Egypt by the year of 2030. This pledge is part of a national strategy to implement the widely adopted United Nations Social Development Goals for 2030.

The ministry aims to launch a coalition of doctors called “Doctors against FGM”, as many of the FGM procedures performed in Egypt are performed by doctors. The coalition aims to combat the practice by spreading awareness among doctors who practice it and families who perform it on their daughters.

In 2014, Egypt witnessed a significant decline of FGM prevalence. According to a national survey conducted, only 48% of girls underwent FGM that year, compared to 78% in 2008. The ministry deemed the court verdicts against FGM practitioners were the main factor behind the decrease in its prevalence.

The Misdemeanor Court of Aga sentenced a doctor in January 2015 to two years in prison and fined him EGP 500 on charges of conducting FGM, which resulted in the death of a young girl.

The verdict came two months after the court has initially acquitted the doctor in November. The prosecution, along with the National Population Council, appealed the acquittal. The girl’s father received a suspended verdict of three months in prison.