

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Peace and salvation on the Holy Prophet Mohammed
International Conference of Islamic Scholars (Ulemas) of the West African Region On the Position of
Islam Regarding Practices Harmful to Women
FATWA
Praise be to Allah

An International Conference of Islamic Scholars (Ulemas) of West Africa, Egypt and Sudan on the position of Islam regarding practices harmful to women was held in Nouakchott, capital of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania during the period of 14 to 16 Shawwāl 1432 AH corresponding to September 12-14, 2011.

The symposium brought together Islamic Scholars from Egypt, Sudan, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, in addition to an elite of scholars and imams from Mauritania.

The symposium was devoted to discussion of the phenomenon of Female Genital Mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), common in the above cited countries, and brought to light the texts and purposes of The Sharia, in addition to the experiences of experts and views of doctors on the topic.

After much discussion on the fatwas issued by Al-Azhar Cherif and other Islamic scientific institutions, After learning about the foundations of the fatwa issued by some of the scholars of Mauritania in January 2010.

Considering all this, and based on the following general information and specific Islamic teachings:

1. The legal discourse on FGM/C states that it is not on the level of a mandatory requirement of Islam, but it has constituted an honor among the Maalikis, and he who leaves it behind incurs no penalty and is not condemned by the Sharia and therefore its abandonment has become widespread among many Muslim nations including some areas of Mauritania.
2. The form practiced in parts of Mauritania and West Africa is similar.
3. International health institutions have demonstrated through research the damage of this practice for girls and women in the short term and the long term of their lives.
4. Among the accepted rules of Sharia is that warding off all harm to one's self trumps all other interests.

Considering the above and based on the verse: “... *Do not expose yourself unnecessarily to deadly dangers,*” Qur’an, II, 195 and: “*Truthfully Allah is compassionate towards you,*” Qur’an, IV, 29. In light of the hadith of the Prophet, peace and salvation to him, “*You will do no harm and will not suffer prejudice.*”

And on the basis of the decision of the scholars of the foundations of the Sharia changing the fatwa is not a change in the rules but an application of the rules to specific deeds and cases. Considering all this, the form of FGM/C known and practiced in Mauritania and Islamic countries being the same is not justified and it is prohibited by Sharia.

It is Allah who knows all!

Nouakchott, September 14, 2011

On behalf of the participants, the drafting committee:

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- Dr. Youssouf Al Kewda: Sudan
- Cheikh Ousmane Sow: Senegal
- Dr. Ali Limam: Niger
- Professor Sidi Mohamed Ould Chawaf: Mauritania
- Professor Mohamed Abdallahi Ould Al Moustaphe: Mauritania
- Professor Baba Ould Maata: Mauritania
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2. Dr. Abdallah Al Nejjar: Egypt
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4. Faghiha Ahlam Elhassan: Sudan
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The Ulemas of Mauritania

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