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GIN43298.FE

Guinea: Update to GIN26177.F of 10 February 1997 on the practice of female genital mutilation in Guinea, specifically among the Peuhl; state protection available and its effectiveness (2004).

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The coordinating body on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children (Cellule de coordination sur les pratiques traditionnelles affectant la santé des femmes et des enfants, CPTAFE), a local non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1988, is the main organization working in this field (United States 1 June 2001).

Amnesty International states that the CPTAFE is officially recognized by the Guinean government (AI n.d.). It works with the department of health, social affairs and women; it had a provision against degrading treatment added to Guinea's constitution; it has produced films on female genital mutilation; and it has organized a number of other awareness activities (United States 1 June 2001).

Practice of female genital mutilation

Although it does not provide exact figures, *Country Reports 2003* indicates that female genital mutilation "was practiced widely in all regions and among all religious and ethnic groups [in Guinea]" (25 Feb. 2004). Female genital mutilation was performed on girls and women between the ages of 4 and 70 (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004). "Infibulation, the most dangerous form of FGM, still was performed in the forest region, but less frequently than in previous years" (ibid.). Freedom House states that female genital mutilation is illegal but "widespread" in Guinea and that women's groups are working to eradicate it (23 Aug. 2004).

According to *Country Reports 2003*, the CPTAFE estimated that between 65 and 75 per cent of women were subjected to genital mutilation, which seems to show a decline in the practice (25 Feb. 2004). An article from the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) states that 99 per cent of women in Guinea experience genital mutilation, according to a 1999 survey (11 June 2004). In a 16 March 2002 document, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reported that since 1998, the percentage of women mutilated has decreased by 20 per cent as a result of awareness campaigns, and that 450 practitioners were no longer performing genital mutilations.

Although the Guinean government is trying to raise awareness among health workers of the dangers of genital mutilation, the CPTAFE points out the high rates of maternal and infant mortality related to the practice (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004).

No information on the practice of female genital mutilation among the Peuhl could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

State protection available and its effectiveness

According to *Country Reports 2003*, female genital mutilation is illegal but there have not been any prosecutions (25 Feb. 2004). The IPU states that [IPU English version] "[a]rticle 6 of the Constitution prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment [and that] [a]rticle 265 of the Penal Code (1994) prohibits female genital mutilation and provides for the death penalty in this respect" (16 Mar. 2002).

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), eradication of this practice is part of Guinea's national policy (7 Apr. 2000). However, the effectiveness of a 20-year government program-launched in 1997 with the help of the World Health Organization-to eradicate female genital mutilation is unknown (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004).

No information on the actual effectiveness of the various measures taken by NGOs could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the following initiatives deserve mention.

According to Equality Now, the CPTAFE organized an information campaign for radio and television and set up a female genital mutilation helpline (n.d.).

In November 1999, a public ceremony was held in which 20 ceremonial knives were handed over to a government minister (United States 7 Apr. 2000). Other public ceremonies celebrating the laying down of the excision knife were organized throughout 2003 (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004).

In addition, according to a 2 July 2002 report by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, two grocery stores were opened as a result of a World Bank contribution. The stores provide jobs for the former excision practitioners in the villages of Kouroussa and Kerouane (United Nations 2 July 2002).

The Christian Science Monitor reports that women's groups have been somewhat successful in creating culturally appropriate rites of passage to replace genital mutilation (11 Feb. 2003).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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_____. 7 April 2000. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Elizabeth Kibour and Laura Lartigue. "Throwing Away the Knives: Historic Progress Is Being Made in Eradicating Female Genital Cutting (FGC) Practices in Guinea." <<http://www.usaid.gov/gn/health/news/fgc/>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral source: An oral source did not respond to an information request within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: African Gender Institute, AfrolNews, The FGM Education and Networking Project, Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, République de Guinée, Research Action and Information Network for the Bodily Integrity of Women, Women Living Under Muslim Laws

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