

International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM  
8th of February 2015 , Kurdistan Parlement Erbil

#### Introduction

In 2003, the United Nations designated February 6 as the International Day of Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Over the past five years, events have been held in the Iraqi Kurdistan region commemorating this day. This year, events have been arranged by UNICEF, the UN Human Rights Committee, the Kurdistan Parliament Research Centre, the High Committee of Women Affairs, and the WADI organization, with participation from various activists, media channels and governmental establishments.

#### The Kurdistan Region

On June 6, 2011, in a historic step, the Kurdistan Parliament approved legislation combating domestic violence, ratifying Law No. 8 of 2011. FGM, which was among the various topics addressed by this law, was banned and certain penalties were mandated for those who perform FGM. Thus, the Kurdistan Region became the first governmental entity in Asia to enact a law banning FGM, though its implementation is in an early stage. It is now imperative that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) formulate a strategic plan for combating FGM.

#### The Campaign of 'Stop FGM'

As a result of a broad, continuous 11-year campaign of awareness launched by the WADI organization, with assistance from various women's organizations, civil society activists and numerous media outlets, significant progress was achieved in increasing awareness and understanding of FGM and decreasing the rate of FGM. The most recent scientific questionnaire conducted by UNICEF show that 72% of those questioned are against FGM, a very welcome sign. Recently, WADI and the Dutch development organization Hivos initiated a comprehensive regional campaign called "Stop FGM in the Middle East and Asia". Several conferences have been held and the activities are ongoing in southern Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Indonesia and Malaysia.

#### Ongoing Activities

WADI launched a comprehensive campaign across Iraqi Kurdistan in 2014 in cooperation with UNICEF and the KRG High Council of Women's Affairs along with local organizations including the Pana Center in Kirkuk, the Alind Organization in Duhok, GENDER in Erbil, NBO in Garmiyan, and PDO, WOLA and Nwe in Halabja. The campaign includes various activities including awareness programs and field research, and directly benefits approximately 70,000 citizens. This campaign represents the most extensive anti-FGM campaign ever conducted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

We thank everyone for their ongoing support!

Falah Muradkhan Shakaram  
Wadi Project Coordinator, Kurdistan Region and Iraq

For any further information: [www.wadi-online.de](http://www.wadi-online.de) , [www.stopfgmmideast.org](http://www.stopfgmmideast.org)