



INTER-AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON TRADITIONAL PRACTICES (IAC)  
Affecting the Health of Women and Children

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COMITÉ INTER-AFRICAIN SUR LES PRATIQUES TRADITIONNELLES (CI-AF)  
ayant effet sur la santé des femmes et des enfants

Geneva, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Your Excellency  
Ambassador Phillip Richard Owade  
Permanent Representative of  
The Government of Kenya to the UN  
Geneva, Switzerland

Your Excellency,

We are concerned about the news we read in one of the Kenya daily newspapers [<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/803248/-/vmulq9/-/index.html>] that about 350 girls are lined up for excision. As you very well know this is against the Kenyan law as well as International Conventions that protect the rights of women and children.

Our organization, the Inter African Committee on traditional practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children has been dealing and campaigning against all forms of harmful traditional practices against the health of women since 1984. It has 28 affiliates in 28 African countries one of which is the SETAT Women's Association. We have supported this group technically as well as financially in its work against FGM and other practices. Despite all these efforts the practice continues among certain groups.

By this letter we would like to appeal to you and through you to your government to intervene without delay to stop the ritual that is scheduled for 350 girls to go through this gruesome practice. We would like the government to undertake fact finding measures to take appropriate actions against excisers for the benefit of the Kenyan girls.

I thank you for your kind and urgent consideration to this information.

Yours Sincerely,

Berhane Ras-Work  
Executive Director, IAC

NEWS

# 350 teenage girls to face the knife

By PHILEMON SUTER Posted Tuesday, November 24 2009 at 22:00

## IN SUMMARY

- Ceremony planned for December holidays

At least 350 teenage girls are to be circumcised in the next two weeks in Marakwet East and Pokot Central districts.

A pre-initiation ceremony known as *kitung'a* will take place in Kapsiren village, Koibirir location, on the Friday.

A source from the provincial administration and several primary school teachers told the *Nation* at Tot trading centre that traditional beliefs, the stars, prevailing weather patterns, and other key elements had signalled that the initiations should go ahead.

About 120 girls aged between nine and 16 years are to undergo the rite in Endow, Kaben, and Koibirir locations in Marakwet.

In the neighbouring Lomut and Arpolo sub-locations in Pokot Central, more than 150 girls will undergo the ceremony.

Koibirir chief Alfrick Lorem said the teenagers are to be initiated during the December holidays.

The initiations come amid stern warnings by the government that perpetrators would be prosecuted. Human rights activists say they are the perpetrators of the outlawed practice.

Separately, three married women were circumcised on Tuesday in Chepkwawai village in Chebororwa location in Kisumu.

According to anti-female genital mutilation crusaders, one of the women claimed that she was forced to undergo the rite and divorce by her husband. The other two admitted that they had consented to be circumcised.

Marakwet East district commissioner Joseph Kisangau put FGM practitioners in the district on notice.

"We have instructed chiefs to be on the look-out throughout the December holiday. Should anyone circumcise a girl, they will be prosecuted," he warned.

Marakwet West district children's officer Peter Kutere said the government had criminalised forced circumcisions. He said girls being jailed if their daughters underwent the rite.