Medical Xpress

German doctors seek urgent action on circumcision row

July 15 2012

German doctors are seeking an urgent clarification from the government over religious circumcision after a court ruling calling it a criminal act prompted an international outcry.

The German government had on Friday pledged quick action to protect the right of Jews and Muslims to circumcise baby boys on religious grounds, and voiced concern about the June ruling by the court in the city of Cologne.

The court said the removal of the foreskin for religious reasons amounted to assault and battery and was therefore illegal.

German Medical Association president Frank Ulrich Montgomery told the Tagesspiegel newspaper on Sunday that the decision "created considerable legal uncertainty".

"From the beginning we warned that his culturally sensitive ruling was erroneous," he said.

The College of Physicians called on the government to act to prevent clandestine circumcisions and to ensure that "children do not fall into the hands of any butcher or any old health worker".

The Cologne ruling concerned a case brought against a doctor who had circumcised a four-year-old Muslim boy in line with his parents' wishes.

When the boy later suffered heavy bleeding, prosecutors charged the doctor.

Although the doctor was acquitted, the court judged that "the right of a child to keep his physical integrity trumps the rights of parents" to observe their religion, potentially setting a legal precedent.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: German doctors seek urgent action on circumcision row (2012, July 15) retrieved 1 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-german-doctors-urgent-action-circumcision.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.