

UN passes first resolution on female mutilation

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The UN General Assembly on Monday passed its first resolution condemning female genital mutilation, which opponents say more than 140 million women worldwide have had to endure.

Though outlawed in most nations, the measure represents the first time the traditional practice in African and Middle East nations has been denounced at such a high level in the [United Nations](#).

More than 110 countries, including more than 50 African nations, co-sponsored the [resolution](#) in the General Assembly's rights committee, which called on states to "complement punitive measures with awareness-raising and educational activities" to eliminate [female genital mutilation](#).

About 140 million women worldwide are believed to have been subjected to the practice in which a young girl's clitoris and labia are removed, in the belief that this will reduce [libido](#) and keep a woman chaste. About three million women and girls each year are said to be forced to undergo the procedure.

"We will continue to spare no efforts with a final objective: ending female genital mutilations in one generation. Today, this goal appears closer than ever," said Cesare Ragaglini, UN ambassador for Italy, which has played a leading role in international efforts to eradicate the practice.

He called the UN resolution a "powerful tool" against widespread resistance because it would take condemnation and calls for new

measures to another level.

"It is up to us now to exploit it in a more effective way," Ragaglini said.

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