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Dear Colleagues

Thank you all for your contributions and continued dedication to Ending FGM in your communities. Through the work you are doing as activists and media campaigners to End FGM you are already working to protect the rights of the children within your community by trying to keep them safe from the immediate long term health effects of FGM.

It is also important to realise that as well as protecting children from FGM, we need to protect them from other potential harms which may damage, hurt or frighten them. This is called safeguarding and it means taking action to protect children from harm and making sure that everything you do is in their best interests. It means protecting children from abuse, being treated badly or doing anything that might have a bad effect on their health and development.

In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, GMC recognises that a child means every human being below the age of 18 years.

As part of meeting your agreement with Global Media Campaign, you must make sure that the children you come into contact with are not exposed to:

- Unnecessary media exposure or exploitation;
- Media exposure of any child under the age of 18 without a signed consent form by a parent or guardian
- Viewing or hearing media content without adequate pastoral and safeguarding mechanisms in place

- being filmed or interviewed without the presence of a trusted guardian and/or parental consent.
- Always ensure that if you have any contact with children under 18 years old - that you are accompanied by a trusted adult either from the local community or if that is not possible from your team. Do not speak to or interview a child unless accompanied.

Safeguarding Children

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

The following basic rules should help you when making decisions about interviewing, filming with or involving children in your work on FGM.

- Never be alone with a child you do not know; always make sure you are accompanied by a trusted colleague and a member of the local community.
- If interviewing a child, where possible, make sure that you have discussed the interview with their trusted adult, have parental consent either signed by a parent/guardian and/or filmed a statement of consent from the parent/Guardian, if they can not read or write. It is vital that you make sure that the parent/guardian understands what it means to give parental consent before they sign the form. And where possible the form should be in local languages or dialects
- Always be respectful of the child's wishes. If they change their minds about speaking to you or participating in a media event, their wishes are the most important, do not ignore them. Make sure they are listened to and that anything they are unsure of is dealt with.
- If you are unsure of anything connected to protecting a child from any form of harmful practice, whether physical, verbal or emotional, please contact your regional coordinator or Naimah Hassan in the London office.

- If you are not sure of whether or not to proceed with an interaction with a child, don't, until you get advice from your named supervisors.
- Create and maintain an environment which prevents the abuse and exploitation of children and young people ensuring that I am aware of potential risks with regards to my conduct and work, and take appropriate action so as to minimise risks to children and young people.
- Contribute to building an environment where children and young people we engage with are:
 - respected and empowered to participate in and discuss decision making and interventions into their safeguarding in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities;
 - well informed on their safeguarding and protection rights and what to do if they have a concern

Safeguarding for yourself as a campaigner/ journalist:

Safeguarding is also about making sure that you as an activist and media campaigner are in the best possible position to do your work without interference or danger and also to help you protect the rights of those younger than you.

The following suggestions can help you do that:

- If someone tells you something and you feel they are a danger to themselves or to someone else, you must tell someone. Make sure you tell them that you will have to do this.
- If someone tells you something that means they are in danger during your work, ask them if it's ok to share that info so we can work together as a team to keep them safe. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, or supporting the person, ask them if it is ok for you to tell someone else so they can help too.

- If the person does not want you to tell anyone else you can still ask for support from others just make sure you do not reference or identify the person. Talk to someone else about the situation, not the individual.
- The same applies if someone just tells you something personal in confidence even if they are not in any danger. Always ask them if it's ok to share that information before you do.
- You should always have contact details of support organisations where possible so that if someone tells you something you can not deal with yourself, you have the information with you on people better qualified to help.

Safeguarding FGM survivors in media

- **Ongoing informed consent:** This would involve explaining how much of the interview is likely to make it into the final edit, the themes that are likely to be selected, and the framing of the story, if that is already known. Predictability and trustworthiness (along with safety, collaboration, and offering choices) are important principles of trauma-informed practice.
- **Psycho-education for crew.** Reporters and crews should know how the nervous system responds to trauma and how to support the interviewee. Some ways of supporting the interviewee:
 - Limiting interviews to one hour.
 - Offering choices, for example, of where to sit. (Your ideal setup of bright lights, limited movement on a hard chair, and surrounding darkness may make for a good aesthetic but are all additional stressors on the nervous system of the interviewee.)
 - Offering breaks.

- Asking interviewees what helps when they are stressed, and encouraging them to use those techniques (e.g. shaking out their hands, sipping cold water, or taking deep breaths). If the interviewee gets stuck in an agitated, panicky state (hyperarousal) or, conversely, withdraws or appears emotionally numb (hypoarousal), shut the interview down!
- An assessment for survivors to make sure they have support in place before filming begins. It is not enough that the survivor "wants" to do the interview. If you were a family member, would you allow this person to sign important documents in their current state? If not, then why are you allowing them to decide to participate in something that might lead to future regret and embarrassment?
- Collaborative decision-making about edits, the chosen narrative, and the tenor of the marketing

For more reading: Please see The Girl Generation's [guidelines](#) on safeguarding and child protection following the accepted principles of Do No Harm.

I fully understand Global Media Campaign's child and campaigners safeguarding code of conduct

Name.....

Signature

Date