

BORN PERFECT CAMPAIGN

CARAVAN

#FRONTLINEENDINGFGM



MAURITANIA TO DJIBOUTI:
2024-2026

BY THE GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



THE WORLD’S LONGEST FGM CARAVAN TRAVELLING OVER *15,000 KM FROM COAST TO COAST ACROSS AFRICA. BY THE #FRONTLINEENDINGFGM MOVEMENT AND THE GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO END FGM.

The Global Media Campaign to End FGM is a feminist, frontline movement supporting grassroots-led, local media campaigns against FGM across the Africa.

GMC has backed over 2,000 #ENDFGM campaigns since 2014, amplifying grassroots activism through local, national and international media platforms. We are data-driven, and the results of uninterrupted measurement for six years show that the media is key to a rapid end to FGM by 2030.

Our [#FrontlineEndingFGM](#) movement is a consortium of over 1000 localised organisations and activists across 15 African countries and was founded with the support of The Global Media Campaign to End FGM, the Wallace Global Fund, and UNFPA.

The [#FrontlineEndingFGM](#) Born Perfect FGM Caravan will travel over 15,000 km from west to east Africa over the course of two years, escorted by local frontline organisations, authorities, and media. [#FrontlineEndingFGM](#) organisations will plan the detailed route in each country.

The caravan will run through:

MAURITANIA, SENEGAL, GUINEA-BISSAU, SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA, MALI, BURKINA-FASO, NIGER, NIGERIA, CHAD, CAMEROON, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, SUDAN, ETHIOPIA, DJIBOUTI, SOMALILAND, KENYA, TANZANIA, UGANDA, AND SOMALIA.



THE BORN PERFECT CARAVAN

3 PHASES OF THE CARAVAN CAMPAIGN FROM 2024 TO 2026



- 1** The first stage of the journey will revolve around the launch of the campaign on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (February 6).
- 2** The academy will commence, along with the preparation and identification of the route that the caravan will take in Mauritania in June 2024.
- 3** The journey is expected to last for 24 months, concluding in Djibouti in 2026.

THE PREMISES OF THE CARAVAN

WE KNOW WHAT WORKS, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON IT FOR OVER 10 YEARS
“THE PINK BUS”.

The Pink bus was organised in the Gambia early 2014. Going from village to village with local activists and religious leaders on board, urging people to pledge not to cut their daughters. What we didn't have back then was the network of thousands of activists we have today across the different countries in which we operate.



BORN PERFECT CARAVAN'S MISSION

The Caravan's vision is similar to that of the Olympic torch: passing on the message through banner, 'Dear Daughter' campaign and following media campaigns. The caravan will launch in Mauritania and will be carried across Africa by the local campaigners to the endpoint in Djibouti.

On board the locally escorted caravan will be the book of Dear Daughter pledges signed village by village as communities, inspired by the success of the *Dear Daughter campaign in Somalia, where the communities who once cut their daughters pledge in the Dear Daughter book to protect them from the cut. As every local caravan leaves a village, they take with them the signed "Dear Daughter" pledge book. The caravan's journey will be tracked live and digitally using a digital tracking app and social media presence.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) across Africa remains a huge problem - despite rates falling in some countries. It is not considered a priority issue, given the challenges of war and climate change that large NGOs face.

Gender resources are often diverted for such emergencies, which is why FGM has to be locally owned and delivered by activists in the community who consider it to be an urgent priority and who can, with little resources, make a huge difference.

FGM causes devastating physical and mental harm. It can vary from Type 1 (the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans) to the more severe Type 3 (the complete removal of all the external genitalia, usually with a razor blade and the sewing up of the vagina).* It is practised in 31 countries, and 200 million women and girls alive today are estimated to have undergone FGM.



In Africa, the practice of FGM stretches across the Sahel and national borders, from Somalia (99% prevalence rate amongst women and girls aged 15-49)** to Mali (89% prevalence rate).

THE BORN PERFECT CARAVAN'S MESSAGE

The Born Perfect Caravan's message is a local celebration that all girls are Born Perfect. It is a community celebration of the girl child, led by the elders of that community.

FGM does not have any medical or cultural justification, the forces driving it vary from one community to another. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to it. The fight against this practice is necessarily granular and must be locally led.

Nevertheless, risk assessments are done locally village by village and those local organisations who escort the caravan make the decisions about what route to take; and what local influencers are on board (musicians, doctors, religious leaders etc). The message will be shared through songs, films, prayers, and medical sessions to stop cutting. It will go village by village, followed by live broadcasting on local radio to make a lasting impact.

The caravan will be equipped with a small digital broadcast facility - to enable it to link live to the local AM station, and will also engage government and local officials. It will travel town by town, village by village, from the west coast of Africa to the east over the next two years, covering over 15,000 kilometres at a safe and considered local pace - determined by local activists.

The #FrontlineEndingFGM Born Perfect Caravan however is an ignitor/launch event.

The arrival of the caravan marks the beginning of three years of bi-monthly, cheap local radio campaigns in each village, town, and region.

These campaigns will all be run by the local #FrontlineEndingFGM activists in each community.

The caravan, as it crosses borders with the Born Perfect book on board gathering thousands of signatures as it goes, will also attract national and international media attention.



Left: Fatoumata Diawara: Malian singer-songwriter and survivor of FGM

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

The caravan is the ignition point for 3 years of local media campaigns – which if replicated on the same scale as previous successful local campaigns are capable of driving down the rates of the worst form of FGM by over 90%.

This Born Perfect caravan starts with a national 3-day Bootcamp from the beginning 2024. At the boot camp the first group of Mauritania local activists will complete the plans for the first leg of the caravan, following the success of the trial in July–August of 2023, followed by local government buy-in; in Nouakchott, Mauritania’s capital.



RISK AND SAFETY

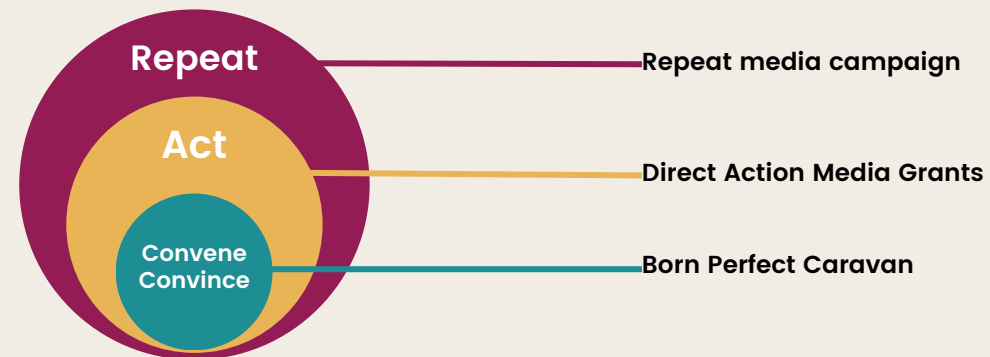
Local leadership and knowledge will help to ensure that local authorities welcome the caravan and that it is granted a safe passage. Local understanding will ensure the caravan’s route across state and country borders and the communities’ most influential citizens.

OUR APPROACH

THE CARAVAN'S ARRIVAL IN EACH VILLAGE WILL MARK THE START OF AN INTENSIVE THREE-YEAR PROGRAM OF INEXPENSIVE BI-MONTHLY RADIO CAMPAIGNS. BASED ON THE #FRONTLINEENDINGFGM MOVEMENT'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CONVENE-ACT-REPEAT (CAR) STRATEGY:

The Global Media Campaign to End FGM (GMC) was created in 2014 to carry a bold vision: make a real contribution to a world free from FGM by supporting frontline campaigners directly, relentlessly and sustainably. We are working to raise the volume and accelerate the end of FGM across all practicing countries, by enabling local organisations to act at the community-level directly.

In 2022, the #FrontlineEndingFGM movement was born in Naivasha, Kenya. This movement of over 1,000 local organisations plans to shift the power from private consultancies and large INGOs to the frontline organisations directly. This grassroots-led movement works through the CAR model: Convene and Convince, Act, Repeat.



Our numerous impact measurement studies* show that cost-effective, local radio campaigns costs as little as \$0.50 per girl to be protected from FGM.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: CAR STRATEGY

- The #FrontlineEndingFGM C.A.R. strategy uses the caravans arrival to convene and convince: Country by country, high-level religious, cultural and political forces to condemn FGM through granular lobbying village by village.

CONVINCE AND CONVENE

- Making sure all key stakeholders are gathered with the “community and commit to getting involved after learning what the medical consequences of FGM are/the fact that it is not a religious requirement/watching films broadcast in the village/hearing survivors testimonies etc.

ACT

- Approved, community endorsed #FrontlineEndingFGM campaigners (who are registered on the Local Organisations Digital Directory immediately after the caravan leave / boot camp ends (2 days) are able to apply and receive funding for localised action through Direct action Grants.
- (These grants which vary from \$200 to \$3000 can be used as the local organisations decide (eg radio shows, community discussions, school interventions, film screenings, consultation meetings with key stakeholders, digital campaigns etc.) They are the pulse of the campaign, and roll out on a bi-monthly basis.

REPEAT

- GMC works behind these campaigners as a funding pipeline, ensuring repeated, nimble and safe sub-granting to frontline campaigners. The precondition for each cycle of grants is impeccable narrative and financial reporting for the previous round, guaranteed by this model.

OUR IMPACT

In some countries such as Kenya, the rates can be rapidly driven down by radio campaigns, following the caravan, with local religious leaders.

The FGM caravan is an affordable and effective means of behaviour change, scalable and country specific. It is also the mechanism to ignite three years of intense cheap local radio campaigns in local languages, delivered by local influencers.

Our evidence shows that these cheap local campaigns already impact prevalence rates across the Sahel.

Our research shows that in Tana River, Kenya; localised media messaging against the practice, backed by religious leaders, has led the type 3 acceptance rate to fall from 89 to 5% after only three years of uninterrupted media coverage. In Bamako, Mali, six months of anti-FGM TV jingles aired before and after the news bulletin led to an 8% drop in parents' acceptance rate of the practice for their daughters.



WHY THE CARAVAN TACKLES MORE THAN FGM

Research and practice show that FGM is not a stand-alone issue and largely overlaps with issues surrounding maternal and child health, forced child marriage, education, poverty, climate change and population displacement. Accordingly, FGM is not only about SDG 5.3 and cannot be tackled in isolation.

For a more obvious example, we observe that a woman who has undergone FGM type 3 (removal of the clitoris, minor and major labia, and sewing of the vagina close) is 55% more likely to experience neonatal mortality, 30% more likely to require a C-section and 66% more likely to require child resuscitated during childbirth.



These numbers are only a few of the alarming consequences FGM has on women's and girls' health. The SDGs will not be reached without tackling FGM as the entry point for girls into all other forms of gender-based violence.

SOME BORN PERFECT CARAVAN LOGISTICS

During the average one-day, one-night stay in the village, the Born Perfect campaign, which will usually have at least one singer/entertainer on board as well as a doctor, a religious leader, or any other local influencers who will perform to the audience.

The arrival is marked with a small “Born Perfect” party – soft drinks, local sweets, and entertainment – celebrating the girls of the village. They will also hear from a doctor and/or religious leaders explaining why FGM should not be practiced.

What Happens When the Caravan Arrives: Making digital technology work to amplify end FGM

The caravan will utilise the new digital opportunities now available to local campaigners. Its arrival with the local authorities on board will be marked with a digital photo session with the influencers and all the girls and women in the village.

The best digital photo will then be sent back to the nearest town to be made into a giant poster – with the headline Born Perfect. This will be part of the legacy left behind by the caravan.

The second digital innovation will be the signing of the ‘Dear Daughter’ petition in each village where the elders/parents pledge to protect their girls by signing the Dear Daughter petition – both online and also in the Dear Daughter book – inspired by the work of #FrontlineEndingFGM co-founder Ifrah Ahmed. This book is signed village by village, country by country across Africa with the book being passed by campaigners to each other. A digital copy will also display the live collection of signatures.

The Live Digital Tracking of the Caravan will be tracked with a live picture gallery posted as it moves.

WHY THE CARAVAN WORKS

Poverty, crop failure and climate change in many countries have made it even more difficult for people to travel – so the message must come to them. Women who must not only work, fetch water and care for children have no leisure time, so the caravan – a celebration of the Born Perfect campaign – will travel straight to their doorstep.

MORE ABOUT OUR #FRONTLINEENDING FGM APPROACH

A short summary of #FrontlineEndingFGM's work across 15 countries reveals a unique, locally run approach to ending FGM which is cheaper and more efficient than any other. Our impact studies show rapid reductions in FGM in the countries where frontline organisations are consistently supported to buy cheap airtime.

The Born Perfect caravan is the last bold manifestation of how local agencies work best. A view supported by over 40 years of study into the efficiency of local grassroots women led organisations in 70 countries.

According to a Gates Foundation study “a closer look at the Global Media Campaign initiative to end FGM through engaging the media by working with women activists across sub-Saharan Africa exhibits a unique approach...”

GMC to end FGM was one of the only organizations focused on addressing gender justice in the Global South that exclusively had women activists and survivors organising against the practice of FGM by speaking directly to the communities, media and the public.

We believe the messenger matters more than the message and that, carried by the right influencers, the anti-FGM fight can reach its 2030 deadline set by the SDGs. After over 2000 local media campaigns, the GMC has launched the #FrontlineEndingFGM in 2023: a movement of over a thousand activists leading local advocacy campaigns to end FGM directly in their communities. This grassroots-led approach works along these lines:

THEORY OF CHANGE

We believe it is possible to end FGM globally by 2030, but only IF behaviour-change **advocacy is carried out locally**, and in relation to overlapping issues of GBV and SRHR. Once power and funding is handed over to frontline campaigners, who know the practising communities, their traditions, languages and beliefs, **THEN** FGM acceptance **rates** begin to **drop** dramatically. This is done through relentless cycles of local sub-granting, managed through a solid financial pipeline and measured through Lean Data.

EXAMPLES OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES IN COUNTRY 1: MAURITANIA

Considering the public enthusiasm ignited the launch of the first campaign from Bababe, the authorities' support and the impact of the #FrontlineEndingFGM campaign in surrounding countries, we anticipate the following outcomes:

A team of 40 campaigners and key stakeholders trained in anti-FGM strategies
A surge in the volume of anti-FGM media content aired by Mauritanian media
The smooth rollout of 90 Direct Action Grants

Organisation of 17 local advocacy and outreach activities, including school interventions, community dialogues, film screenings and medical presentations

In the long-term, we expect an increase in the number of girls enrolled in secondary schools and a dramatic drop in the number of forced child marriages in the South regions of the country. For this launch phase, we consider these first metrics realistic and will be looking to develop new survey tools to measure the campaign's impact on girls' school enrolment alongside



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HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT

THE IMPACT OF THE LOCAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS WHETHER IGNITED BY THE CARAVAN OR BY THE BOOTCAMP IN THE FIRST PHASE WILL BE MEASURED BY LEAN DATA EXPERTS 60 DECIBELS, FROM 2024 ONWARDS.



60 Decibels is a global, tech-enabled impact measurement company that brings speed and repeatability to social impact measurement and beneficiary insights. It provides genuine benchmarks of impact performance, enabling organisations to understand impact relative to peers and set performance targets.

60dB has a network of 1,100+ researchers in 80+ countries, and has worked with more than 1,000 of the world's leading impact investors, companies, foundations, corporations, NGOs, and public sector organisations.



Through its Lean Data approach, 60 Decibels can help #FrontlineEndingFGM better understand the effectiveness of the Born Perfect Caravan Campaign. 60dB uses phone surveys conducted in local languages by local researchers, to gather data and insights in a number of areas including gauging beneficiaries/respondents access to media, level of understanding of FGM practices, and attitudinal and behaviour change.

While phone surveys allow for more in-depth data collection to gather qualitative and quantitative insights directly from beneficiaries, SMS and whatsapp surveys enable campaigns to gather quick quantitative feedback. In gathering these insights, respondents' voices can directly inform future decision-making and strategy.

*WHO (2022) Female Genital Mutilation. See [here](#).

**UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (2021) Accelerating Change : 2021 Annual Report. See [here](#).