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Press Statement

**NHRC CONDEMNS THE DEATH OF A MONTH-OLD BABY ALLEGEDLY AS A
RESULT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) AND CALLS FOR
URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is deeply saddened by reports of the tragic death of a month-old baby, allegedly after undergoing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This incident is a grave violation of the child's fundamental human rights and a reminder of the urgent need to eradicate this harmful traditional practice from our society as provided by law. FGM not only inflicts severe physical and psychological harm on the victims but also constitutes a grave violation of the rights to life, dignity, health and freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment that are guaranteed under the 1997 Constitution, the Women's Act, 2010 as amended and the Children's Act, 2005.

The Gambia is also bound by its commitments under regional and international human rights instruments which includes the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Maputo Protocol, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT), all of which safeguard the rights of children and prohibit harmful traditional practices.

FGM is a criminal offence under the Women's (Amendment) Act 2015, and perpetrators of this heinous act must be held fully accountable under the law. We call upon:

1. The Inspector General of Police to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation into the incident, and arrest and prosecute all those responsible.
2. The Government to intensify and expand community awareness programmes on both the dangers and the illegality of the practice.

NHRC reiterates that the right to life is sacred and non-derogable. No cultural or traditional justification should override the obligation to protect children from harm. We call on the Government, as the primary duty bearer, to vigorously enforce the Women's (Amendment) Act 2015 and reaffirm our commitment to a Gambia where every child grows up free from violence, abuse, and harmful practices.



Emmanuel Daniel Joof

CHAIRPERSON