

Cameroon

1.4%¹

Key Findings

In 2004, the prevalence of FGM/C in women aged 15–49 was 1.4%.
84.1% of women and 84.6% of men who have heard of FGM/C believe it should be discontinued.²

Geography:

The highest prevalence is found in the far north, at 5.4%³

Age:

Data suggests FGM/C is most likely to be performed between the ages of five and nine⁴

Type:

‘Cut, flesh removed’ is the most common type of FGM/C practised⁵

Agent:

89% of girls/women are cut by traditional midwives/birth attendants⁶

Development Indicators

SDG Gender Index Rating: 136 out of 166 countries (2023)⁷

Population: 29,438,320 (as at 6 September 2024),⁸ with a 2.71% growth rate (2024)⁹

Infant Mortality Rate: 26 deaths per 1,000 live births (2021)¹⁰

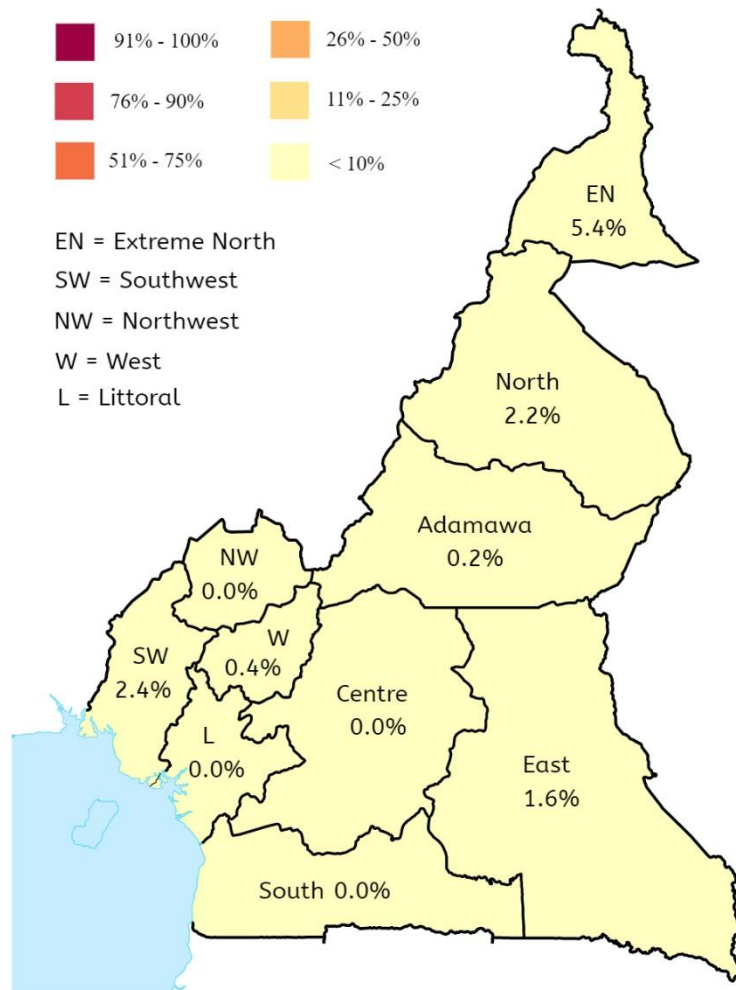
Maternal Mortality Ratio: 438 deaths per 100,000 live births (2020)¹¹

Literacy: 77.1% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write¹²

‘The advancement of women cannot be conceived of without an end to FGM.’

*~ Jacqueline Ntep, a manager at the Ministry for the
Promotion of Women and the Family¹³*

Prevalence



Prevalence of FGM/C in Cameroon by region

[Data source: DHS 2004] © Orchid Project

The region and the ethnic group with the highest prevalence are Extrême-Nord, at 5.4%, and the Arabe-Choja/Peulh/Maoussa/Kanuri, at 12.7%, although the low numbers of women in the survey who have undergone FGM/C make figures further broken down by region and ethnic group somewhat unreliable. FGM/C is more prevalent among women who practise Islam (5.8%) than among women of other religions, and among women who live in rural areas (2.1%) than among those who live in urban areas (0.9%). The prevalence in the capital city of Yaoundé is also 0.9%.

70.4% of men and more than half of women who have heard of FGM/C see no benefit in it. The higher the level of education a person has received, the more likely they are to hold the opinion that FGM/C has no benefits. 84.1% of women and 84.6% of men who have heard of FGM/C believe it should be discontinued, but 8.1% of women and 3.9% of men think it is required by their religion.¹⁴

To date, there is not enough data available on FGM/C in Cameroon to determine any reliable trends.

Cameroonian Law

In July 2016 the Penal Code of Cameroon was amended to include a reference to ‘genital mutilation’. Section 277 states, ‘Whoever permanently deprives another of the use of the whole or any part of any member, organ or sense shall be punished with imprisonment from 10 (ten) to 20 (twenty) years.’ There is a lack of evidence, however, of any FGM/C cases being prosecuted under this law.

References

- 1 **(‘DHS’)**: Institut National de la Statistique (INS) et ORC Macro (2004) *Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Cameroun 2004*. Calverton, Maryland, USA: INS et ORC Macro, p.236. Available at <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR163/FR163-CM04.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2017).
- 2 DHS, pp.236 & 242.
- 3 DHS, p.236.
- 4 DHS, p.237.
- 5 DHS, p.237.
- 6 DHS, p.238.
- 7 Sustainable Development Report (2024) *Cameroon*. Available at <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/cameroon> (accessed 6 September 2024).
- 8 Country Meters (2024) *Cameroon*, 6 September. Available at <https://countrymeters.info/en/Cameroon> (accessed 6 September 2024).
- 9 Central Intelligence Agency (2024) *World Factbook: Cameroon*, 28 August. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cameroon/> (accessed 24 September 2024).
- 10 UNICEF (2024) ‘Cameroon’, *Countdown to 2030*. Available at <https://data.unicef.org/countdown-2030/country/Cameroon/1/> (accessed 24 September 2024).
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Central Intelligence Agency (2024) *World Factbook: Cameroon*, 28 August. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cameroon/> (accessed 24 September 2024).
- 13 Sylvestre Tetchiada (2006) ‘Rights – Cameroon: Finally, a Law Against Female Genital Mutilation?’, *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 3 July. Available at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2006/07/rights-cameroon-finally-a-law-against-female-genital-mutilation/>.
- 14 DHS, pp.236, 239 & 241–242.