**Training of outgoing Army Officials to Darfur (GAMCOY21) on FGM and Gender Based Violence**

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**Organized by Safe Hands for Girls**

**Venue: Gambia Armed Forces Training School**

**26th February – 2nd March 2018**

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**Acknowledgement**

We cannot do much without expressing our sincere gratitude to the Gender Unit of the Gambia Armed Forces for requesting a training on FGM and GBV for the (GAMCOY 21).

Our appreciation is also extended to the GAF staffs that supported the training in their respective capacities.

Special thanks to the Safe Hands for Girls team and all the individuals that contributed to the success of the training.

**Executive Summary**

Safe Hands for Girls is a survivor led women’s organisation that aims to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation and all other forms of Gender Based Violence through advocacy programs, trainings, workshops and community outreach, as well as to provide support to women and girls who are survivors. Safe Hands for Girls was established in 2013 with offices in the U.S. and The Gambia.

(GAF) The military of the Gambia is the armed forces of the Gambia. It consists of two branches, the Gambia National Army and the Gambian Navy. It formerly included the National Republican Guards, from 2008 to their abolition in 2017, and the Gendarmerie, from 1989 to 1996, when they were moved under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior.

**Introduction and Background**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a deeply rooted tradition practiced in The Gambia by different ethnic groups throughout the country in all regions. Despite this harmful practice people believe that FGM is a religious practice. This results up to severe long-term health effects including psychosocial effects that can deeply affect the lives of young women and girls.

Globally, Gender Based Violence is one of the biggest threat’s women and girls experience. It is either physical or sexual violence whether it is domestic, rape or sexual trafficking. It not only has an impact on a survivor’s emotional and physical health but also her reproductive health as well.

As a result, Safe Hands for Girls with and the GAF organized a four (4) day training on FGM and GBV. The training was aimed to target (GAMCOY 21) that were preparing to leave for Darfur, Sudan for the peace-keeping mission. 208 army personnel were targeted but a total of 192 participants attended the training. The training sessions were led by staffs of Safe Hands for Girls.

**Highlights of the report**

**Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony was graced by Lieutenant Colonel Mai Touray, Mam Lisa Camara, Sait Matty Jaw, Major Abdoulie Manneh, and Lieutenant Colonel Essa Tamba and was chaired by CPL Mariama Camara, assistant to the Head of Gender Unit.

**Remarks by:**

* **Sait Matty Jaw** – In his remarks congratulated participants for being selected to represent The Gambia for Peacekeeping mission in Darfur & extended greetings on behalf of Safe Hands for Girl’s Executive Director (Jaha Dukureh). He states that the purpose of this training is to equip these soldiers with knowledge on gender based violence and harmful traditional practices, he further states that Gender Based Violence is not a woman’s issue but a Human rights issue and as servicemen it’s extremely vital for them to have such concept on issues surrounding Gender Based Violence. In his words “Safe Hands for Girls is glad that the army requested such a training as they realized its pivotal for them to learn about GBV” Mr Sait ends his remarks by expressing gratitude to the soldiers for partaking in the training.
* Colonel Essa Tamba – Began by thanking the moderator for her introductory remarks. He also thanked Mr Sait, Major Abdoulie Mboob (Deputy Commander of GAMCOY 21), Colonel Mai Touray (Head of Armed Forces Gender Unit) for honouring their invitation to the workshop. Mr Tamba extended appreciation to the Chief of Defence Staff for granting approval towards the workshop. He noted that the training is the first of its kind to be accorded to any GAMCOY team leaving for a UN peacekeeping mission. He states that Gender Issues form a cardinal point in the operations of the United Nations mission so therefore he thanks Safe Hands for Girls for the lecture as it couldn’t have arrived at a better period. He further states that this is an exceptional training accorded to GAMCOY 21 in anticipation of their UN Mission and therefore he urged all participants to be attentive and interactive in order to gain knowledge from the training. Mr Tamba ended his remarks by thanking Safe Hands for Girls for leading the workshop and declared the training officially opened on behalf of Colonel Mai Touray.

**Session One: Gender Based Violence**

This session was facilitated by Modou Lamin Davies (Programs Officer for Advocacy). He started by defining gender and then stated the factors that determine gender. He went further to define sex and pointed out the key differences of gender and sex.

Mr. Davies then elaborated on violence as a whole.

* **Violence:** when someone uses his/her strength or position of power to hurt or harm someone else on purpose, not by accident, then his/her action or behaviour becomes violence.

He then presented on the main topic of his presentation (GBV) wherein he defined GBV using both the UN General Assembly and UNHCR definitions respectively.

* **UN General Assembly:** any act of violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women; including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.
* **UNHCR:** Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

He went on further to press on the different forms of gender-based violence, namely;

* Sexual
* Physical
* Economical
* Psychological

He then tackled the socio-consequences of Gender Based Violence, some of which are; drug and alcohol abuse, miscarriages, divorce or family breakdown, fatal injuries etc.

He went on further to discuss on how GBV is a public crisis giving few countries as example, for instance Bangladesh.

He concluded his presentation by stating the role of security personnel’s in handling GBV.

**Session Two: Health Complications of FGM**

This session was facilitated by Fatoumata J. Newlands (Programs Assistant) and Mass Laye (Programs Officer for Training and Outreach).

Miss Newlands facilitated the first part of the session in which she analysed the way in which tradition influences the society. She elaborated on tradition and how it influenced the practice of FGM/C. She first started by defining tradition the enlightened on the different types of traditions which are; beneficial (good), harmful (bad) and neutral (neither good nor bad) tradition. These types of traditions are classified based on the rate they affect individuals medically.

Furthermore, she went on next to define FGM/C and stated the different types of FGM/C performed

* Type 1 (Clitoridectomy); It involves the removal of partial or all of the clitoris.
* Type 2 (Excision); It is the removal of the clitoris together with the labia minora.
* Type 3 (Infibulation); Excision of part or total of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of the vaginal opening also known as infibulation
* Type 4 (Unclassified); other procedures, these are the unclassified types for example piercing, stretching of the clitoris or the like.

Next, she enlightened on the management of wounds, then gave examples of some methods. She went on further to press on the origin of FGM followed by the reasons for practicing FGM and then the prevalence rate both in The Gambia and globally. She made it clear that the reasons mentioned above were misconceptions.

Mr. Laye presented on the health complications of FGM/C.

He emphasized on the effects pertaining to FGM, e.g. the Immediate physical complication which include Bleeding, Infections, Sexual complication, complication during Labour and delivery and the complication of the new born baby.

**Session Three: Law Banning FGM and GBV**

This session was facilitated both by Awa Gai (Administrative Assistant) and Marie Jeng (Program Assistant).

Ms Gai facilitated the first set whereby she gave a brief introduction of the session stating the materials provided in enabling the legal framework for the promotion and protection of women’s right. She went on further to define the law banning FGM;

* As a mechanism put in place to deter people from the harmful practice of FGM and to punish those that go against such law i.e. also referred to as the Anti-FGM law.

As provided in the Women’s Amendment Act 2015;

Section 32A (1) states that;

* Provides that the person who engages in FGM (circumciser) is liable upon conviction to pay a fine of D50,000 or 3 years imprisonment or both.

Section 32(B) states that;

* Accomplices to the practice of FGM are liable upon conviction to pay a fine of D50,000 or 3 years imprisonment or both.
* Failure to report; when you know that the practice is happening or about to happen and you fail to report a fine of D10, 000 will be charged.

In addition, Section 32A (2) states that where FGM causes death, punishment will be life imprisonment. Reference was made in the case of the Sankandi v IGP.

Marie added that when the Act was made, Section 32A was not part of it, that it was later included.

Ms Gai told the participants that FGM is a violent act and that there are other laws that state it indirectly as a form of inhumane treatment and a violation to the rights of women and girls. She added that if they wanted to get more information, they can refer to the regional and international instruments as stated below;

* The 1997 constitution of The Gambia Section 21 and 28, states that women should be free from all forms of violence and inhumane treatment.
* Children’s Amendment Act 2016 Sections 19 and 24 emphasizes on the protection of the child from harmful social customary practices and criminalizes child marriage respectively.
* CEDAW-Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
* ACRWC Article 21 (1A) states the same.
* CRC-Convention on the Rights of the Child

Ms Jeng facilitated the second set. She further went to share the outline of the presentation with the trainees. Next, she went on to state the laws governing FGM and their penalties. Next, she elaborated on the Domestic Violence Act (2013), what it states and the penalties faced when the law has been violated. She concluded with the Sexual Offences Act (2013) wherein she defined rape and stated the penalties.

**Closing Ceremony**

CPL. Mariama Camara, assistant to the Head of Gender Unit chaired the closing ceremony.

Lieutenant Colonel Mai Touray, Head of the Gender Unit gave the vote of thanks on behalf of her department.

Mam Lisa Camara addressed the audience and coaxed them to keep the good record that they have made.

Sait Matty Jaw gave the closing remarks.

Major Abdoulie Manneh, the battalion commander for (GAMCOY 21) gave a dissertation to the battalion going for the peace keeping mission to maintain their status.

Lieutenant Colonel Essa Tamba, Head of the Child Welfare Unit gratified Safe Hands for Girls for their effort for making the training successful.

LT Col Rabiatou Jarju, represented the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and gave a statement on behalf of the office.

**Challenges/Observations**

* The army lack the knowledge of the constitution of The Gambia substantially on Civil Laws.
* Some army personnel’s think some parts of the constitution should be amended especially the laws governing FGM and GBV

**Next Step/Way Forward**

* Integrating the GAF Gender Unit and Child Welfare Unit.
* Training the civilians on GBV and FGM/C as well as the laws governing them.
* Training the military police, officials and recruits on GBV and FGM/C as well as the laws governing them. (Fajara, Yundum and Farafenni Barracks)