Saleema ... The Accomplishment of Positive Society Change with the Support of Law



Moshrigah is a beautiful open-minded ten-year old girl from Wad Sulfab Unit, El Hassaheissa Locality in El Gezira State. I met her during Saleema Forum for Communication, held in partnership with Wad Sulfab Universities and High Institutes Students Association in Dar Al-Rabatah (Association Premises) in the Locality in November 2017. Moshrigah knew of Saleema through TV ads and Saleema attractive bright colors and posters. In a heartbreaking sad tone and heavily pouring tears she said (I am dejected) due to the agonizing experience of undergoing the painful and debilitating female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) operation earlier. I calmed her. She asked me to help her to protect the girls, in her community in Wad Sulfab area, from this atrocious process and keep them Saleemat (sound, uncut and healthy as created by God). I assured her and pledged help and transmit increasing awareness doses in El Gezira State, in general and Wad Sulfab in particular and I invited her to join Saleema Initiative Campaign so she can become an ambassador of the Initiative for the sake of young girls. Her features changed and her face brightened up with a lovely smile. She cuddled the booklet of 'Saleema and Amel' to her breast and said "I will tell the story of 'Saleema and Amel' to all my girl-friends in the school and persuade them to protect themselves by refusing to undergo female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C).

Moshrigah, like her name, which in Arabic means 'glowing', did not stay idle, she vowed, loud and clear, to help keep the child-girls of her generation protected from FGM/C despite being mutilated and cut herself so Wad Sulfab area would become FGM/C free. Smile up Moshrigah!, smile up all child-girls of Sudan, the Transitional Sovereign Council approved, in an historic move, a law that criminalizes and punishes against FGM/C practice as stated by Sudan Ministry of Justice on Friday, 10 July 2020, whereas Article 141 of Sudan Criminal Law criminalizes and punishes on practicing FGM/C plud the cancellation of a number of women discrediting articles in some laws.

The National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW), male and female advocates of children and women rights protection, the donors, the United Nations agencies, the national and international organizations, local community activists, the societal organizations and the civil society organizations (CSOs) have all played a significant role in achieving the societal positive change and curb the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), so these incessant efforts were crowned with the law, which followed the glorious December Revolution as a victory brought by long years of relentless efforts so we breathed a deep sigh of relief, thanks to the Revolution and the glorious revolutionaries and the Transitional Government. The law has been enacted for the protection of the dignity and pride of the Sudanese women and girls from repeated corporal violations. One of the most important initiatives that have and still are playing very significant role in recent years for the abandonment of the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), is 'Saleema Initiative,' which was launched by the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) and the UNICEF Sudan in 2008 to protect child-girls from FGM/C with relentless efforts encouraging collective FGM/C abandonment by the societies in Sudan who are involved in making the decision of FGM/C abandonment using positive and attractive ways and means. Saleema aimed to change the mindset and the way people talk about (the female circumcision) in novel and innovative ways using positive terms at the community level to describe the body of the female in its natural state as created by God, as Saleemat i.e. sound, healthy and uncut, describing the uncircumcised young lady as complete and healthy, physically and mentally, unhurt, uncompromised, untouched and intact as created by God.

Saleema Initiative spreads in all states of the Sudan and in the national and international forums and activities concerned with childhood and impressed neighboring countries like Somalia and Egypt, so the African Union Commission adopted it as pan-Africa initiative to end the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) in Africa by the year 2030. The local community effectively contributed to the positive change by declaring collective FGM/C abandonment in a number of Sudan states, besides applying pressure for the enactment of laws at the state level, whereas 6 states issued FGM/C criminalizing laws. The most recent law was issued in North Kordofan State in 2018 associated with media campaign and supporting activities through TV cable networks and local radio stations plus posters and ads in the streets and public squares for raising awareness using Saleema Approach in different interventions in local communities underscoring the importance of the law and reporting any violation to protect the child-girls. The awareness targeted the basal communities, children, parents, doctors, midwives, health practitioners, religious clerks, young men and women, teachers, activists, advocates, human rights defenders and lawmen, lawwomen and other law enforcement officials so the law would become a societal culture that the society and health practitioners become aware of for the protection of our child-girls to leave them Saleemat, pl. of Saleema i.e. (uncut, sound and healthy as created by God).

This newsletter includes different topics highlighting Article 141 of Sudan Penal Code that criminalizes female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), interview with the Secretary General of the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) besides the contribution of the young men and women in bringing about the positive societal change in Khartoum and the states.

saleema

National Council for Child Welfare Welcomes Criminal Law Reforms, Vows Support:

Press Release

المجلس القومي لرعاية الطفولة – الأمانة العامة
The National Council for Child Welfare - Secretariat General

The General Secretariat of the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) issued a press release hailing criminal law reforms and vows to support enforcement through a strategy to coordinate and consolidate efforts in partnership with all relevant entities and activists, according to the press release, which reads: "In an historic move, the Transitional Government approved a package of legal reforms, to the forefront of which is the criminalization of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) and prohibition of execution of convicted children."

The NCCW Secretariat General said it welcomed the essential reforms introduced to the Sudan Penal Code (Criminal Law) including FGM/C criminalization and adoption of deterrent punishments against perpetrators, besides the prohibition of children execution among other indispensable reforms to the child criminal justice system.

"The long overdue step of the criminalization of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) is a step, which had been awaited by millions of child-girls hoping for protection from this heinous practice, enduring disappointment after disappointment by consecutive ruling political elites for tens of years amidst incessant calls by several governmental and non-governmental entities.

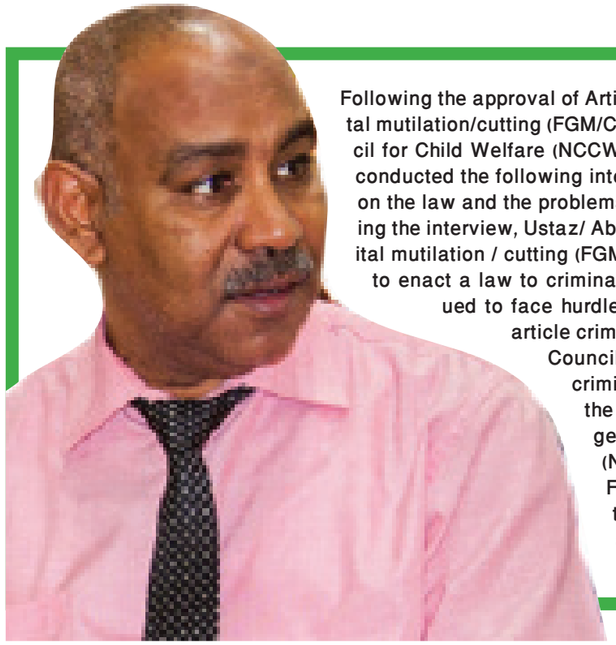
In support of the enforcement of this law, the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) said it is "coordinating with its partners in the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the United Nations organizations and the civil society organizations (CSOs) for the preparation of a ten year strategy (2020-2030) targeting change of negative social norms and advocate for child-girls protection from all forms of violence and psychological and physical harm, the press release reads.

"The Criminal Law amendments of the year 2020 also include very important reforms in the system of criminal justice for children topped by the prohibition of execution of convicted children below 18 years of age and adopting the age criteria of minimum age limit for criminal accountability at twelve instead of seven years with the cancelation of harsh and humiliating punishments (such as child flogging) and replacing freedom unrestricting punishments with community service and parole, which are also replaced for pregnant and breastfeeding women and mothers of children below five years of age with community service and parole in less serious crimes apart from homicide and likewise." The Sudanese Minister of Labor and Social Development, Ustaza/ Lina Al-Sheikh said "this historic step will help eliminate all distortions from the child criminal justice system and contradictions between the national and international legislations and agreements ratified by Sudan, which increase the chances of the country re-integration in the international community putting an end to isolation."

"The National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) today renews its keenness and resolve to work and cooperate with all childhood partners and those concerned with the childhood issues in the government and the civil society and the international partners to exert more efforts to eliminate all obstacles and barriers in the justice system for children and reform the criminal justice system to facilitate access to justice for children in achievement of the declaration of 2020 as the year of childhood in Sudan.

NCCW' Secretary General

FGM/C Criminalizing Law One of the Revolution Victories:



Following the approval of Article (141) of the Criminal Law, which criminalizes female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) by the Ministry of Justice, we met with Sudan National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) Secretary General, Ustaz/ Othman Shaiba Abu Fatima and conducted the following interview with him to know NCCW's plans for raising awareness on the law and the problems expected to face the law enforcement on the ground. Opening the interview, Ustaz/ Abu Fatima considered the law that criminalizes the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) as one of the victories of the Revolution, saying attempts to enact a law to criminalize (FGM/C) started since the nineteen-forties, but it continued to face hurdles, particularly during the ousted regime after abolishing the article criminalizing the practice from the Child Law 2010 submitted to the Council of Ministers. He ascertained that the ratification of a law that criminalizes FGM/C practice is one of the big victories achieved by the Revolution for the young girls, in particular and the women in general. He stated that the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) exerted big efforts for enacting a law to criminalize the FGM/C practice, but the political and legislative organs used to hold back. He confirmed that the law is a federal law that applies to all the states of the country and it will give a morale boost to the social workers.

Q: The law punishes anyone who commits the crime of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) with three years jail term plus a pecuniary fine, is this punishment deterrent enough?

A: The practice of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) cannot be tackled with criminalization and punishment; it rather requires social change, as well. The punishment of three years jail term is good, whatever symbolic it is, for it is basically directed towards those who practice FGM/C, thus the law consequently supports the positive social change.
Therefore, we are presently developing a ten-year strategy (2020-2030) with the purpose of changing the social norms and misconceptions around the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C). The strategy is an extension of Saleema Initiative Campaign and the different activities targeting social change.

Q: Does the punishment cover the family of the victim and associates in the crime?

A: The punishment does not cover the victim's parents (the father and mother). It is gradual to avoid harsh confrontation in the issues of social nature, which is nonsense.

Q: Saleema Initiative and campaign role in spreading awareness of the law in the local communities?

A: There is a roadmap for a campaign especially for the law targeting the practitioners, the society and the different judicial organs (prosecutors, courts, police and family and child protection units). The campaign around Article (141) of the Criminal Law was launched in August to end in December 2020.

Q: What are the guarantees for the implementation of the law on the ground of reality?

A: The biggest guarantee is the awareness of the society. Based on recent studies around 75% of girls below 14 years of age are FGM/C free, besides the widespread society awareness constitutes a guarantee for the implementation of the law, moreover, the campaign of awareness on the law comprises reporting systems at the level of the local communities, which helps bring cases to courts, which in turn deters those who practice FGM/C, the biggest guarantee to the strategy and the national campaign is to continue to push for putting an end to the practice without antagonism.

Q: What are the systems of reporting?

A: Different mechanisms of protection have been formed at the level of local communities for reporting and for monitoring the practice and gathering information about FGM/C spreading or dwindling compared to the previous strategy, however, the system will later on develop so cases will be reported in advance before they even take place for the purpose of criminal indictment.

Q: Has the law entered into effect?

A: The law has entered into effect since August 2020 and was published in the Official Gazette.

Q: Are you satisfied with the role of the mass media in monitoring resistance, especially the resistance of religious and cultural nature?

A: The political cover was unveiled from the religious claims with regard to female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), for the antagonism was political rather than religious, since the political religious position no longer persist, therefore the antagonism was political in the first place with no religious base. The official media used to play a poor role in confrontation, for we are talking about a revolution that brings about essential social changes, hence I expect the Revolution media to play a big role for the mission is to bring about social change rather than criminalization and punishment for the FGM/C is practiced based on ethical beliefs linked to the concepts of honor, chastity and purity, so "we do not want to fight these values because they are too important and we need them in all communities, but their achievement does not require the mutilation and cutting of the female genitalia.

Q: Are you ready to fight the resistance of religious natures?

A: We are ready to confront the resistance by continuing the campaign. Now, there is a reduction in FGM/C practice by 75% and the political status quo is presently in favor of the campaign, thus the resistance will eventually subside.

Q: What is your opinion on the role being played by the civil society organizations (CSOs) in fighting the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C)?

A: The civil society organizations (CSOs) are the spear head throughout history in fighting the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C). The work started with social initiatives and movements in which the civil society has played and is still playing a pivotal role and will continue to play this pivotal role. The civil society is considered a principal member and a true partner with the government as its role is executive whilst the government role is coordinative.

Q: What do you expect from the organizations so the law enters into force smoothly?

A: The enforcement is done by the judicial, prosecution and the police, however, the civil society is required to help in drafting the law, spreading the values and implementing the ten-year strategy to end the practice of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) and play a big role in raising awareness in the different states of Sudan.

Q: What is your visualization of the form of partnership between the civil society organizations (CSOs) and the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) in light of the new era after the Revolution?

A: A mechanism will be formed to oversee the end of the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), which comprises the civil society as a genuine component and a true partner that owns and implements and "we in the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) do not implement, but we rather coordinate the efforts of the civil society."

Q: What are the safety measures taken by the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) for the protection of children from COVID-19?

A: We, in the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) focused on the street children and the pupils of Khalawi (traditional religious schools). We transported a big number of Khalawi pupils to their families in a number of states in Sudan (the majority of them from Darfur states and the Blue Nile state), besides we reunion around ten thousands children with their families for the lack of health criteria for children. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the civil society organizations networks financed the provision of two fresh meals a day for the street children.



Blue Nile State Y-Peer Organizes Mobile Activities for Awareness on COVID-19

The Youth Peer Network (Y-Peer) in the Blue Nile State organized, in cooperation with the Faculty of Society Development of the Blue Nile University and the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a number of mobile activities for raising awareness on COVID-19.

The awareness drive covered the Localities of the Blue Nile (Damazin, Bau, and El-Tadamun) and taught the audience on the ways of the virus transmission, its incubation period and prevention against it, in addition to the distribution of masks, sanitizers and personal hygiene utensils, whereas the awareness focused on the society segments most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Moreover, the Y-Peer Network organized online forum that discussed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the youth ideas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Network also celebrated the International Youth Day (IYD) including sessions of youth dialogue around gender based violence, COVID-19 and an exhibition that comprised messages and posters expressing peace, hand works and leather products showing the Network goals and activities, besides the participation of the youth in the local, regional and international work. Moreover, a scientific paper was presented in the sidelines of the exhibition on the importance of the youth participation in the process of peace and the social peace in the Localities of Er Roseirse and Wad Al-Mahi in addition to the transmission of three radio episodes on the psychological and social aspects of the home violence during COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to performing activities of the unit for fighting violence against women and children in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and wall drawings on COVID-19 and training courses on manufacturing soap, masks and sanitizers, along with the distribution of personal hygiene tools to women and girls in child bearing age and printed posters and T-shirts plus stationary materials carrying messages on gender based violence and COVID-19 and distributed phones and number of social protection networks for reporting any violence case during COVID-19 lockout.

Interviews of States Councils for Child Welfare SGs on FGM/C Criminalizing Law

Following the endorsement and entry into force of Article 141 of Sudan Criminal Law, which criminalizes and punishes against FGM/C practicing, we interviewed a number of Secretary Generals of States Councils for Child Welfare:-

Ustaza/ Hayat Ali, the Secretary General of the Red Sea State Council for Child Welfare (RSSCCW), said Article 141 of Sudan Criminal Law criminalizes the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) and imposes deterrent punishments against culprits. She confirmed that intensive awareness raising activities are afoot through the Red Sea TV channel, radio and all mass media. She vowed to raise awareness of medical cadres, health practitioners and midwives at their workplaces, besides educating mothers in residential neighborhoods, noting that awareness-raising campaigns are targeting 10 localities in the State stressing: "We are looking forward for positive outcomes in the forthcoming period."

Meanwhile, the White Nile State Council for Child Welfare (WNSCCW) Secretary General, Ustaza/ Najat Ballah Juma'ah said the activists and law workers in her State have welcomed the law, noting that they gave a number of awareness raising lectures and radio series to educate the public on the new Article that criminalizes FGM/C practicing in collaboration with our partners, who include the UNICEF Sudan, UNFPA Sudan and Reproductive Health in the White Nile State and CAFA Development Organization.

In the same context, the Secretary General of South Dafur State Council for Child Welfare (SDSCCW), Ustaza/ Najat Hamdeen said the enactment of Article 141 of Sudan Criminal Law that criminalizes FGM/C practicing "gives us a strong push forward to intervene in communities with confidence to make a positive change," adding: "Saleema Initiative has a huge role, through which we learned how to positively change the societal mindset and correct misconceptions to eventually lead to declarations of collective FGM/C abandonment by entire communities, indicating that "the term Saleema implies positive messages and suggestion for the protection of child-girls from FGM/C to be left Saleemat as created by God".

SDSCCW Secretary General stressed that Saleema Initiative has promoted the social values and manners leading to positive change as young girls are left Saleemat i.e. uncut, sound and healthy in body and mind, in God-given state. Saleema also encourages dialogues inside families and communities leading to the emergence of unheard voices and addressing taboos."

She said: "Sixty (60) local communities in our State have abandoned the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C)."

Najat confirmed that the law has entered into force, according to the prosecution office, "thus anyone who commits the crime of FGM/C will be taken to court and punished," ascertaining that ten (10) localities in her State have declared abandoning FGM/C. The SDSCCW Secretary General said: "We must address the violation of the child-girls' right to life, for several victims lost their lives to FGM/C, a harmful multidimensional habit with religious, social and health dimensions, which has emerged as one of the crucial childhood protection issues. It causes devastating health complications during childhood and motherhood, according to medicine." She confirmed that big efforts were underway to eliminate the harmful FGM/C habit at both the official and civil society levels since the nineteen-seventies, saying: "Our goal is to make Darfur State FGM/C free, since the State has started the implementation of the National Strategy for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C)," adding: "We went deep into the communities, so some communities vowed to leave girls Saleemat after they were taught of the dire consequences and zero benefit of FGM/C."

She said: "We have the support of the governmental institutions, religious leaders, parliamentarians, scientific research institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and communities' leaders, in addition to the support of grassroots communities through the protection networks in the localities, whereas the work was carried out in accordance with the international agreements, treaties and charters signed and ratified by Sudan."

Moreover, the Secretary General of North Dafur State Council for Child Welfare (NDCCW), Ustaza/ Ibtisam Al-Douma said the FGM/C criminalizing law broadly welcomed in her State by the Youth Mechanism for Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C) and child protection groups and networks in the State.

She unveiled that a plan has been developed for advocacy and raising awareness of communities through the mass media, besides educating child protection networks and societal committees and forming mechanisms for raising awareness of the law within the local communities by the civil society organizations, and developing a plan to train the religious and community leaders, decision-makers and child protection action group.

Training on Saleema Communication Methodology

The Institute for Development Studies and Research organized, in collaboration with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Sudan and in coordination with the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW), a workshop of training of trainers (TOT) on Saleema Initiative Communication Approach in the period 22 to 27 August 2020. The Workshop trained 29 young men and women from the National Youth Forum Group. Trainer Ustaza/ Nada Habbash said the workshop trained the participants on interventions in communities to fight harmful social norms using Saleema Initiative's Methodology.



In the same context, the Head of Documentation and Information Unit at the Development Studies and Research Institute, Ustaza/ Ibtisam Mohamed Suleiman reaffirmed the goals of the training, noting that the group of trainees included young men and women representing the civil society organizations (CSOs), students and the resistance committees.

At the end of the Workshop, the Director of the Institute for Development Studies and Research, Dr. Abdul Hamid Elias vowed support to young men and women, saying: "We invest in the future through the youth who are the main tool of change." He applauded the partnership with the UNICEF Sudan in important matters with good impact on the children of Sudan.

Furthermore, Ustaza/ Najwa Mohamed Da'wood, of the Institute's Women and Development Unit, said in the second phase of the training of trainers (TOT), a group of male/female trainees will be selected to work with the local communities and train the youth actors inside their communities for the sustainability of the project. She indicated that they had intervened in three areas, namely; Khartoum, Bahri (Khartoum North) and Omdurman.

The National Youth Mechanism for Children Protection Welcomes FGM/C Criminalization

The National Youth Mechanism for Children Protection welcomed the law criminalizing the practice of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C), applauding the big victory that crowned the relentless efforts of the national and international organizations, the civil society organizations (CSOs) and the youth leading role in bringing about positive societal change and the enactment of a federal law criminalizing and punishing against FGM/C practice.

The Youth Mechanism reiterated the requisite to activate and enforce the law in the Sudan to curb the harmful practice that constitutes a big challenge to human rights actors, noting that the law helps its efforts in health education and raising awareness to persuade the locals to abandon FGM/C and leave girls Saleemat to avoid the FGM/C devastating and life threatening health consequences.

The Mechanism appeals to mass media, national and local TV and radio stations, newspapers and social media platforms and health promotion divisions in schools to raise awareness of the law.

The National Youth Mechanism for Children Protection also pushed for inflicting the punishment prescribed by Article 141 of the Criminal Law on anyone who commits the crime of practicing the female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C).

The National Youth Mechanism for Children Protection was formed during the National Youth Conference for Supporting Abandonment of FGM/C and Underage Marriage of Child-Girls in Al Obeid, 26-27 November 2016, which included a group of youth activists in societal issues from the different states of the Sudan to step up the youth role in the development of the people in local communities.

The Mechanism aims to harness the youth efforts for the abandonment of norms and habits harmful to the health of mothers and children by getting all the society segments involved.

One of Y-PEER Champions for COVID-19 Pandemic Response





Sabah Ibrahim Mohammed Musa, a young engineering graduate from Al-Obeid, North Kordofan State. He owns Moka Café and works for CAFA Development Organization, North Kordofan State Branch as the Director of Programs. Sabah tells his story of volunteering for COVID-19 Pandemic Response, as follows:

"I have started volunteering since 2008. I received basic training of the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER).

"My volunteering during COVID-19 Pandemic Response started when I heard of COVID-19 cases in Sudan. A WhatsUp post by Y-PEER Training Coordinator drew my attention. The post indicated that they were preparing quarantine for COVID-19 emergencies and casualties in Al-Obeid Hospital. I was in Moka Café then. I was worried of the pandemic likely outbreak in Al-Obeid, the Capital of North Kordofan State while we are not ready and have no places to help the infected patients. I immediately talked to the young men and women present in the café at the moment, who showed big response and enthusiasm to help. Then, we went to the proposed Quarantine Center and prepared it, then we established an initiative to support quarantine centers in the Localities of North Kordofan State (Bara, Er Rahad and Umm Rawaba…), at the same time COVID-19 cases started to emerge, then hospitals were closed for the lack of protective suits for the health cadres. Amidst the fear and panic, we assisted the operation of the units of general and pediatric accidents and obstetrics and gynecology hospital, then we drew our attention to the medical cadres, COVID-19 cases and their families, whereas we provided sanitizers, masks and gloves for four Localities plus kits-bags for the 'White Army' i.e. the doctors, nurses and paramedics and gifts to the infected health cadres and distributed foodstuffs baskets to 80 families.

The project started with the preparation of meals for the quarantines' patients and staff, the general and pediatric accidents units and obstetrics and gynecology hospital for two months, besides we pledged to provide three meals for the targeted categories.

In conclusion, Sabah said: "The most difficult days, the young male and female volunteer passed through was the period of response to COVID-19, but the difficult work is nothing compared to the feelings of love and gratitude of the patients and their happiness and joy for their recovery, which made us to forget all the pain and difficulties we had faced us and gave us positive energy to continue fighting COVID-19 pandemic.

Sabah Message to the Community:

"We are capable to realize our dreams in development, if we work to achieve them. Let us work for the Sudan of our dreams, so our dream will come true."

Sabah Special Message to the Young Men and Women:

"As young men and women, we are capable of changing the reality, if we have faith to bring about the positive change. A difficult period passes every one of us soon after graduation until he/she finds a job, however this period is considered one of the most important periods in our lives for it defines our future. The voluntary work can be a good outlet for our energies, creativities and innovation and as long as you, young men and women, have faith in your goal God will, for sure, help you to accomplish it."

Criminalization of (FGM/C)

Whoever removes or mutilates any part of a female genitalia, by cutting, mutilation or change of any natural part in a way that causes partial or complete loss of its function, whether that removal or cutting is done in a hospital or primary care centre, or a private medical unit or outpatient facility or any other place, shall be deemed to have committed a crime of female genital mutilation.

(2) Whoever commits the crime of female genital mutilation, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not to exceed three years and a fine and the venue of the crime may be closed.

