Saleema

# National Strategy for Abandonment of Children Marriage Launched




**Khartoum, Burri**

**The dialogue around the National Strategy for the Abandonment of Children Marriage December 12 10am, Thursday started at at the Police Forces House (Dar El- 2015 Shurtta) in Burri, Khartoum, under the patronage of First Lady, Widad Babikir, the Sponsor of the 'National Strategy For the Abandonment of Children Marriage' and the supervision of the Minister of Welfare and Social Security, Masha'ir Al-Dawalab and the presence of the UNICEF Resident Representative in Sudan, Geert Cappelaere, the Executive Director of the Organization of African First Ladies, Sonia Ndimbira, the Secretary-General of the National Council for Child Welfare, Su'ad Abdel Aal, the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Mustafa Sidgi, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, Ibrahim Adam Ibrahim and the Minister of State at the Ministry of .Health, Sumaiya Akkad**

**The launching ceremony was attended by a large number of journalists and pressmen from the radio stations, TV channels and newspapers in addition to the representatives of a number of civil society organizations and children rights' national organizations in Sudan. The campaign started in the Universal Children's Day and concluded with the International Day of .the Human Rights**

**This Strategy was prepared based on the Family Strategy, the Women's Empowerment Strategy and the policies and strategies of the protection of the .women and children**

**The overall objective of the Strategy is to achieve legal and social protection to children from the implications of underage and children marriage and ascertain their right to education, health and social .awareness**

**The Strategy wrapped up with a number of recommendations the most important of which is the activation of and work vide the jurisprudence perspective that supports the abandonment of children marriage and shedding light on the data on child marriage in vital statistics, besides it also recommended integrating scientific research, surveys and studies on child marriage in the development programs and the continuous evaluation of the conditions associated with the protection of married children and strengthening the legislation supporting the abandonment of children marriage and participating and benefiting from the experiences of the local, regional and international institutions working in this field and the legislations, laws, conventions and charters that ascertain and protect the .rights of the child**

## Editorial

Al–Sir Macki, a columnist

### Female circumcision is a ferocious custom

**The woman is the mother of the human being, she carries him/her in her belly and cradles him between her bosom while he is aware of nothing save the character she molds, which he shows up in his/her life afterwards, and she fed him her milk, feeding him from her blood and compassion. She is the affable wife who satisfies his needs, ending his loneliness and gives from her health and comfort of her heart to meet his needs and overcome the obstacles facing him. She submerges him with her compassions and mitigates the heavy impact of misfortunes and sorrows, and renews the exuberance of life in him. She is the better part of the household and half the mankind in kind and number and strength in the production of all its facets.. She is the mother who does not sleep while her children .are hungry**

**Islam honors her, raised her worthiness and respect and prohibited her burial (a pre-Islam practice by ancient Arab "to get rid of shame"). The Arabs pessimism of begetting girls was prevalent as narrated by the Holy Quran in manifestation of slander « And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and He hides himself (58) .he suppresses grief from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide. The prophet (the Peace and .(59 ,58 (An Nahl Blessing of Allah Be Upon Him) proudly said: «I am the father of girls» and said of the Mother Of Believers Aisha: « Take half the teachings » ... (of your religion from this rosy (woman**

**Girls' circumcision is a habit that came from far bygone eras. If the girl birth is a bad omen for the ancient Bedouins who used to bury her alive, but Islam prohibited such as the Holy Quran says: « And when the girls [who For what sin (8) were] buried alive are asked hence their circumcision ,«(9) they were killed came as a lower stage as some imagined that the woman is a source of temptation to the man and she is the one who drags him to vice and that she is meek, scalable and fallible so they saw in circumcision a brake and a suppression of her instinct and fall (which is untrue), but it is rather a distortion of her body and impediment to giving birth naturally but it even leads to diseases like fistula (vaginal hemorrhoid or a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged obstructed labor, leaving a woman incontinent of urine or feces or both), Intrapartum fever (fever during labor), maternal and infant mortality .and abortion and bleeding ... etc**

**The men of the medieval Europe invented the chastity belt, and even the dispute between them was be duel as the woman is something owned despite her very important role in the society as so many women have become the bread-finder of their families today and still the women is doing manifold of the man work and gains less than half of his wage, besides the numerous household tasks and .children care, which are unpaid jobs**

**The practice of female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C), which moved from backward communities to many communities, through the ages, is a heinous bloody operation misleadingly portrayed by some as a religious duty which is not, but it is rather a primordial habit inherited by the society, generation after generation, without a justification and since the women have gone to schools and universities and excelled and outshined thus there is no point to be despised and .oppressed by their society**

**If we despise women and we do not care about their humility and the subduing habits controlling their lives and are humiliating them, such is but a manifestation of our contempt for ourselves and surrendering to our lowliness and fall down and if we love, respect and value them and endeavor to empower them to complement themselves, such is but a form of our love and respect for ourselves and endeavor to complement . .ourselves**

**The so-called (Pharaonic circumcision) is a distortion of the woman's body and a chapter in the destruction of her humanity and exposing her to mutilation, suffering, imminent death and loss of confidence in her ability to protect herself and her human right to grow up healthy, sound, intact and enjoying physical and psychological .wellbeing**

**It is not Islam that puts the women in lower class, such doesn't fit with the essence of Islam. The Amir of the Faithful, Omar ibn Al-Khattab said, when a woman disputed his words, .. «A woman got it right and Omar made a mistake», acknowledging her full right.. It is part of our duty to treat the women gently, raise their worthiness, respect and appreciate their nurturing and .care for us and for our children**

# Saleema is a successful initiative that has enabled some women to abandon FGM/C

## A smart partnership with local communities and opening forums for discussion .. Well Aware youth in Ed Damazin and neighborhoods free of girls circumcision

**Saleema Initiative opts to societal dialogue as a kick start point for the positive change in communities to encourage and support collective decisions. Although so many people have expressed desire to know the opinion of others on this issue, but the old patterns of communication about female circumcision led to guessing or making decisions based on false information and misconception, so Saleema began to encourage and promote new types of discussions around the harmful practice as one of its objectives is to make the positive change perceptible and appreciable... .in addition to the numerous indicators for the positive change with regard to the people way of thinking about Saleema Initiative**
**This opinion poll showed the general understanding of Saleema Initiative among young men and women from the State of the Blue Nile State, who participated in a training workshop At Al-Alag Center last November, and their assessment of to what extent it succeeded in creating dialogue .and contact within the local communities and whether they support the Initiative and their vision for its work in the future**

**Poll by: Tahani Adam Sadan**

### :Zahra Ali

Zahra indicated that she believed that Saleema is a successful initiative evidenced by its wide spread in different regions of Sudan, wherein it enabled some women to decide not to circumcise their daughters, noting «but in southern Al-Kernak and Shali area and some other areas in the Blue Nile, which are considered closed areas, there is a need to properly convey Saleema concept and message in the local languages and dialects in attractive form of propaganda such as Saleema beautiful advertisements through its fundamental message: « Every Girl is Born Saleema, Let Every Girl Grow Saleema», which is a message .that posed a question within the family, as the subject of mostly positive discussions
She pointed out that Al-Sika Hadeed Neighborhood in Ed Damazin «is now free of girls» circumcision and the young men and women therein are well-aware and are urging to .«(leave every girl Saleema (unharmed
Zahra said: Saleema Initiative represents me and I am an advocate of it and of all of its contents because (a cousin of mine died in her first birth because of circumcision) .. Therefore I want the initiative to go on to reach out to all the Sudanese families so Sudan .will be free of FGM/C

### Fayha Ahmed Farah, of the Childhood Welfare Council in Blue Nile

Fayha talked of the holistic approach of Saleema Initiative represented in health, awareness, education and well-being embodied in an integrated healthy society. She said in the old days, the fight against harmful habitual practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) used to be handled with negative ways and shocking and repulsive approaches, but now Saleema came with innovative ways and is spreading positive messages and created the beautiful description of Saleema (sound/healthy) for .the uncircumcised girl who is otherwise stigmatized and rejected by the society
The advertisement is clear and straightforward in the streets and the mass media, besides the colors are beautiful and cozy, and as for the health, Saleema is acceptable and understandable, but some operations are carried out in secrecy. In Ed Damazin, we need follow-up and evaluation of the remote localities and peripheral areas to avoid health, .psychological and social problems that occur because of the circumcision
My sister›s mother-in-law is a midwife, she wanted to circumcise her granddaughters» but her sun, i.e. my sister›s husband flatly refused and said he wanted every one of his .(daughters to remain Saleema (sound and healthy

### :Fadwa Abdul Rahman

Fadwa says: Saleema Initiative is objective and purposeful and is addressing and rectifying the erroneous notions of families that lead to the genetic mutilation of their daughters so Saleema seeks to convince families to leave their daughters sound and healthy as created .by God
Saleema informative advertisements that shed the light on the core message «Every Girl is Born Saleema, Let Every Girl Grow Saleema», which is the ultimate goal of the Initiative, is simple and clear, question raiser and easy to memorize and exchange, and I think it has achieved a breakthrough in rectifying the people mindset, but the healthy uncircumcised girls still suffer from the stigma, whilst some girls asked for being circumcised likewise .their peers for fear that young men might refuse to marry them
In Al-Taif Neighborhood in the Blue Nile State, the people are aware of Saleema, which has influenced the mass base of the Neighborhood and drew attention and interest so the (change has started from the family and my sister is now saleema (sound and healthy

### :She added

I combine my voice with all the advocates of Saleema Initiative, so every girl to come («shall be sound and healthy (saleema

### :Shirin Abul Qasim

Saleema is sound and healthy as has been created by God. Saleema Initiative is successful and has taken a space in the minds of communities, but the announcement has not availed the opportunity for the uneducated communities to understand its message. For example, a woman, who heard us discussing the concept of Saleema as a new positive concept seeking to stop female circumcision, said «since the girl is not sick, what are you trying to cure her from?». Saleema should reach out to the various segments of the society, the educated and the illiterate to generalize the benefit in the peripheral regions .while focusing on the countryside because it has the biggest rate of the practice
In Er Roseires locality, there is a high rate of awareness of Saleema Initiative, because its people are mostly educated, besides a workshop was held on Saleema with wide impact so I would like to ask those in-charge of informative workshops and forums to use the colloquial language and local dialects to address the rural communities and train midwives and female students in villages to consolidate Saleema concept and to convey .Saleema message to all people
I am personally supportive of Saleem and I represent my home-area and I call for leaving .every girl saleema

### Salah Al-Rashid of :(Algunaiss Gharb (Western Algunaiss)

Saleema, in terms of the idea, is an impeccable initiative and the community is in a pressing need of it for the importance of the drive to fight the female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C), but the form of the announcement is not enough to convey the message sufficiently for the general understanding only reaches those who have a preconceived which %40 idea about Saleema and I think that the Initiative is successful in the states by is below the ambition. We need broader communication means so the message can reach .all targeted segments of the society
In the south of the Blue Nile State, there are sound and healthy girls (saleema), besides some specific ethnic groups, like the Adok for instance, do not circumcise their daughters and I as an advocate of Saleema Campaign who fights all forms of harmful practices and customs, I will not circumcise my daughter Mariam, who is yet to be born to be saleema .and her sister will also be saleema as well

### :(Shaddad Dau Albait (Kurmuk Locality

I have not heard Saleema Initiative before, but through the replies of the colleagues I knew what it means and I support it if it can convince the communities of the necessity to leave every girl saleema as she is born, but in the rural areas, girls are circumcised without any accountability
In Al-Mak Nile Neighborhood and Al-Shahid Affendi and Gunaiss Sharg (East Gunaiss) neighborhoods there is no electricity, so I do not think they are familiar with the Saleema Initiative like me
A number of organizations launched awareness campaigns about circumcision, but they encountered difficulty in delivering the information for their lack of knowledge of the local dialects in the region. I suggest, if possible, to train male and female teachers in the areas that lack the resources to facilitate the delivery of information to the largest number of local communities which are still practicing circumcision in public and in .secrecy
Some communities in the Blue Nile State believe the lack of circumcision is stigma and inherent defect that follow girls anywhere and this is due to the customs and traditions and the fear of the community and through my observations, most of the maternity .deaths are because of the circumcision
I advocate Saleema because it carries beautiful contents and is working to cure the society from the negative practices. I assure you that every one of my daughters will be .(saleema (sound and healthy

### :(Ramah Al-Rasheed Al-Hadi (the mechanized farming

Ramah started his words saying: «She is created Saleema let her to live Saleema». He went on saying: «My general idea of Saleema is that it is an initiative calling for leaving every girl Saleema and save her from the harmful habit of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) i.e. girl circumcision, which entails physical and psychological health consequences. Historically, the girls circumcision has no basis, neither religion nor scientific as it is just an old deep-rooted habit and old tradition practiced by families and communities and Saleema Initiative is seeking to curb this harmful habit in a different approach away from instructions or orders like «stop it» or «abandon it». It has a positive hopeful approach using illustrative drawings, bright colors and attractive logo which convey the message properly so the communities started to discuss Saleema with no shame for the beauty of .the vocalizations and expressions used in communicating the message
We need, in the Blue Nile State, to open forums for discussion and educating local communities through a smart partnership with the universities, associations and political .organizations in the universities
I support Saleema Initiative, because a girl in the region had three of her arteries cut on her wedding day by her husband because of the circumcision, so she was hospitalized for weeks until she recovered..We need to raise the awareness of the young people, who are about to get married to avoid any damage to the circumcised girls and urging them to leaving their daughters and sisters sound and healthy to save them the serious harm caused by circumcision. I call for leaving every girl Saleema and I will leave everyone of my daughter .Saleema as created by God

### :Nazira Musa

I look to Saleema as a purely inherent human right to all girls to stay sound and healthy. The circumcision is an ancient harmful custom enshrined in society unaware of its risks. Saleema Initiative has come for reform and call incurred by him and the sound came from the call for to leave every girl Saleema without mutilation and violation of the women›s privacy
The advertisement does not target all the communities in the State of Blue Nile, a lot of people said the advertisement is an a promotional ad of Zain Telecom, however Saleema reached the community, raised a question and changed well-established concepts through awareness by its ambassadors and the songs during the campaign, but I want the organizers to work with the local communities with their indigenous dialects in harmony with the local environment surrounding them. Many anti-circumcision workshops were held by the civil society organizations but they linked the mortality rate of girls and mothers to .circumcision without any statistics to support them
In Al-Rabi›e Neighborhood and specifically the Hausa community does not practice girls circumcision and does not stigmatize uncircumcised girls. I believe Saleem website is full of .useful information and answers many questions. It is beautiful and attractive
I advocate Saleema Initiative. I am Saleema and I promise to leave everyone of my .daughters Saleema

### Mu›taz Fadul :(Blue Nile Radio)

The concept of Saleema is dissuading girls circumcision in a positive lovely way through new and beautiful means to create a positive change in the society. The outstanding logo saying «Every Girl is Born Saleema, Let Every Girl Grow Saleema» created a lot of questions in the community and as I am interested in children›s issues and I present open episodes for children in the Blue Nile Radio, I call on those in-charge of Saleema Initiative to get the children involved as stakeholders for the children nowadays are well aware of their issues and discuss them seriously and effectively working on two essential and sensitive segments, which are the girls and the mothers, therefore, they must be involved in the awareness drive to deliver the message through them to their families and small and large communities in the Blue Nile State. Circumcision is practiced collectively in traditional methods inflicting serious damages to young girls amid families denial as they do not recognize the circumcision as the real cause of the damages, which they usually attribute .to otherwise reasons to keep the habit rather than abandoning it



# Saleema in the States

## The National Council for Child ,2015/12/03to1,Welfare(NCCW)held a workshop for the secretaries of the child welfare councils' in the .different states of Sudan

**The workshop aimed to set the minimum standards for the .protection of children in the humanitarian circumstances**
**In interviews held by Saleema Website with a number of states' councils' secretaries about progress made in their states in relation to Saleema Initiative and to what extent Saleema concept and visions have been implemented in the states, most states secretaries, despite the privacy of each state, confirmed the good activity among the people in their states, particularly the youth, pointing out that forums were held, viewers clubs were formed and community dialogues .were held**
**The Secretary of the Child Welfare Council in Kassala State, which is a border state of special privacy, said they had given a special importance to the conditions of the Eritrean and Ethiopians refugees, noting that Saleema campaigns was launched in the local communities and the refugees camps at the same time. In some states, Saleema Initiative achieved a breakthrough whereas law bills were drafted and submitted it to the states' legislative councils for ratification in the Blue Nile State and South Darfur State, of its 106 besides the Blue Nile State also announced that communities have abandoned the female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C), whilst the State of South Darfur witnessed of its communities 10 remarkable progress, whereas announced the abandonment of female genital mutilation/ communities more are preparing 20 cutting (FGM/C) while .2016 to renounce FGM/C in**
**localities 3 The official in-charge in the White Nile State said of Rebek, Al-Jabalin and Kosti had been surveyed and local communities, whilst 75 societal dialogues were held to local communities in the State of 45 dialogues were held for North Kordofan in partnership with the state authorities in addition to the media activity through the community radio .and the state media**
**The most important achievements mentioned by the states councils secretaries included a unified approach for fighting the female circumcision with one medium language coupled with the passion demonstrated by the local communities to get knowledge and the desire of civil leaders and some religious clerks to cooperate and spearhead Saleema campaign in their communities, however there are some challenges topped by the stigma and the difficulty of speaking in the light of the customs, traditions and religious beliefs, as well as the vast spaces that separate the localities from each other and the lack of sufficient work aides such as cameras and Saleema tools and equipment in addition to poor funding for remote localities as it is the case in the .States of South Darfur and the White Nile**

# Countries experinces from slema regional fourm in oct 2014

Saleema Regional Forum is an excellent opportunity for the dissemination of success stories and presenting the experiences of the local and regional communities in the field of communal abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) particularly through .Saleema Initiative

After launching Saleema Initiative, Sudan hosted a number of visitors from neighboring countries, who came to study and get knowledge of the Initiative and see what is going on and presented positive reports of the Initiative. The country welcomed visitors from Yemen, Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and .Egypt

The United Nations Secretary General commended Saleem Campaign in Sudan in the celebrations of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation which is an emphasis of the ,2014 February 06 commitment to the cause of female genital mutilation abandonment through this forum and other forums yet to come. In this edition we review the experiences of two countries participating in Saleema Regional Forum, namely; Djibouti and Ethiopia

Djibouti Experience

The country experience is based on partnerships with states and alliances with the religious scholars for the elimination of the female :(genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C

saw an assessment of the 2010 The year situation on the level of knowledge about women empowerment and women education. After the assessment, objectives were set for the program and local leaders and clerks were empowered then the Union declared some 100 areas free of female circumcision whilst local groups pledged commitment to abandon female circumcision alongside the officials and leaders of local communities

:The Program General Objectives

The Integration of religious clerk in community-.based programs

.The commitment of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs

Building and raising capacities on the rights of .women and children

Guaranteeing the participation of international .4 experts in the field of exchange of expertise so we held an international consultative forum with Yemen and Somalia, and issued a joint declaration .led by the First Lady of the country ,2014 in

Building partnerships and alliances with the .5 .religious clerks

:The lessons we have learned of the Day are

The religious clerks and leaders play an important role so getting them involved as key personalities makes a desired difference

Building partnerships and promoting .capacities support the exerted efforts

:We faced many challenges, including

The identification of the religious leaders who have the desire to work and cooperate with us in .this field

The different viewpoints and perspectives of the religious clerks and their willingness to work to .raise awareness

Benefiting from our experiences we were able to * :grasp the opportunities to

Solicit the assistance of religious men to advocate for the women›s rights which garner the respect of women audience and we were able to create partnerships with these clerks, especially the women preachers since a number of women believed in what the religious men say in different viewpoints

Get the assistance of international experts in helping to create a relationship of trust with the leaders of the religious opinion

Established a partnership with Egypt and Sudan and partnerships with the local ministries in a comprehensive framework that .created a ground of trust and integration

:Ethiopia›s Experience

Nurturing and supporting the legislative policy and .breaking the barrier of silence in the mass media

Ethiopia is a country of multi ethnicities and religions diversity. Although this diversity is positive but it nevertheless creates problems with regard to traditions

Girls circumcision is practiced in various areas all over the country, in the areas of .pastoralists

The Ethiopian Government sees the practice a breach and violation of the human .rights

The Government deals with these traditions in the context of a policy, norms and .frameworks to spread and raise awareness

There are some harmful practices stemming from and deeply related to poverty, which means that it is imperative to eliminate .poverty

The Government renews its to prevent the circumcision 2014 commitment in (25-20) and underage marriage of girls

The concerned ministries are determined to eliminate the phenomenon over the .next five years as part of the transition plan

:The Results

So many results were achieved during the past five :years, including

We have consolidated and supported the legal .1 policy and programming using the legal terms of references and relevant entities and fields for intervention such as the Constitution, the Constitutional Court –the Women Strategy-- .Fighting Harmful Habits

Break the barrier of silence and our information .2 apparatus is broadcasting the issue in our territories and regions while our awareness raising groups are .indoctrinating and inculcating the issue

:Supporting the Sectoral Departments .3

The Government alone cannot eradicate female circumcision, but there is a strong partnership in this field leading to lower occurrence as a number of surveys carried out by the UNICEF of %76 in Benishangul and Alatar showed that mothers who were surveyed are committed not .to practice circumcision on their daughters

:The Second Edition

The religious institutions announced that the female circumcision has .nothing to do with religion

the Islamic leaders, imams 2014 In and scholars, including the Islamic Shari›ite Court prohibited the practice of circumcision and declared the practice as far away from the religion

The religious preaching on the .issue in various institutions

At the present time more than population voluntarily 000 12 of the %30 declared giving up the habit in their areas and to broadcast this awareness among the neighboring groups especially with regard to traditions since the Constitution allows the regional mechanisms to work with the local institutions so the circumcision operation has .been put in the framework of the local laws

ladies 000 45 A women group of who constitute a local structure have made the pledge not to practice circumcision on their .daughters

Moreover, the school programs and female .students› forums present the best practices

Birth registration and follow-up in an integrated .approach

women in the %90 The support of more than workers union, who formed a women structure, local administrations and religious orientation, and birth registration so as not to become victims of female genital mutilation/cutting .((FGM/C

# Saleema in the eyes of the youth



The communication and outreach campaigns sometimes lack the clear vision of how to reach out while many early campaigns were built on the common assumption that if the people realize the damage caused by the female circumcision, then they will stop practicing it. But as for the information about the damage itself, how it is formed and the way it is put together and presented normally constitute the main material in the outreach program. The first problem in this approach is that it wrongly assumed that most people are now unaware of the big damages caused by this practice. Secondly; the idea that the information about the harmful effects of the female circumcision can solely bring about change does not allow due consideration to the perceptions of the ongoing benefits despite the adverse consequences and the strong social barriers facing those thinking of change, but the opinion of the young people, however, is different and the campaigns amongst the university students and the voluntary organizations' youth has taken a discernible positive nature and their ideas around Saleema Initiative garnered for change to the better vide their collective decisions that created better contact with each other in working for the abandonment of this practice in their communities and the environment surrounding them since they embraced the Initiative believing that its earnest contents should be taken seriously while focusing to fully understand its positive mission calling for leaving the girls healthy and intact in .their natural God-given forms

Every girl is born Saleema, so let every) girl grow Saleema) for the positive .change

They vowed to make the change discernible and engage in dialogue with decision-makers to reach a common ground that ensures the safety of girls and of those uncircumcised from the stigma. They pledged to raise the voices of the youth amidst the youth for they are the leaders of the positive change in partnership with the stakeholders and encouraging them to create new rhetoric styles for addressing the audience and introduce the terms that reflect the positive benefits of keeping the girls healthy and intact (Saleemat i.e. pl of Saleema) to help the youth to take the collective decision by themselves to leave their daughters in the future healthy and sound (Saleemat), and grow .up in a healthy environment