



## VGP Participants March to End FGM/C



Participants March in Egypt under the Coptic Orphans Banner to end FGM after the death of a young girl..

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, Egyptian officials discovered that a girl had been killed. Karima died at the hands of a doctor while undergoing a procedure widely practiced in Egypt but which has negative effects that last a lifetime. She was one of many children to undergo the procedure variously known as female genital mutilation or female circumcision, FGM for short, in which part of a girl's genitalia is removed or damaged for cultural reasons.

Karima's death was not the first of recent tragedies. Only several weeks before, the Egyptian Ministry of Health banned any medical facility in Egypt from performing FGM after a twelve year old girl, Badour Shaker, also died while undergoing the same procedure.

The recent death of Karima shows that the health ministry ban is not enough, because without a law no one can enforce a ban. The National Council for Motherhood and Childhood of Egypt headed by Moshira Khattab has proposed a law that will actually make FGM a punishable crime in Egypt.

After the death of Badour Shaker in July, Moushira Khattab also invited Coptic Orphans to take action.

Twenty girls and women participating in Coptic Orphans marched in Egypt with other organizations to end FGM that same month. Participants carried signs featuring messages such as "We don't want FGM for our Girls" and "Give Us a Law to Protect Us." One girl who participated in the march from the Valuable Girl Project commented afterwards: "we have talked a lot about this practice, but marching for it has left a great impact on us. We must get this message to the whole world."

Coptic Orphans is doing just that. In Egypt, we are informing parents from door-to-door of the dangers and health effects of FGM. Meanwhile, we are holding a forum on the issue in Washington, DC on October 9<sup>th</sup> to bring others together to talk about how to end this practice

FGM will end in Egypt when popular opinion is against it. This is already starting, and you can join in the effort end it by learning more about it and talking to your friends and family who are still in Egypt.

### Quick Stats: FGM

**97%** - Egyptian women over 15 who have been subjected to the practice according to both UNICEF and USAID

**75%** - Egyptian women who said that they supported the practice in 2000 (from USAID)