Forced marriage and female circumcision

Forced marriage and female circumcision are prohibited in Switzerland. Besides specialist centres, victim counselling services can also provide help.

What is forced marriage?

If someone marries due to family pressure and against their will, this is called forced marriage. This is also the case if someone stays in a marriage against their will. Examples of the coercion involved include (death) threats, blackmailing, psychological pressure or physical violence.
Women as well as men may be forced into a marriage. Victims of forced marriage are often younger than 18.

Important to know

Forced marriages are prohibited in Switzerland and offenders will be punished. Victims of forced marriage find themselves in a situation of extreme psychological stress. For them, professional help is often vital.

Where can I get help?

The following centres provide free and confidential advice to victims:

- **Opferberatung Aargau**, 062 835 47 90, www.opferberatung-ag.ch
- **Nationale Fachstelle Zwangsheirat**, helpline 0800 800 007, www.zwangsheirat.ch

What is female circumcision?

Female circumcision involves the cutting of female genitalia. There are different forms and practices of female circumcision. Many circumcised girls and women suffer adverse health and psychological effects as a result of circumcision.

Important to know:

Female circumcision is prohibited in Switzerland and offenders will be punished. Parents may also face prosecution if they arrange the circumcision of their child outside of Switzerland.

Where can I get help?

The following centres provide advice to victims:

- **Fachstelle Sexuelle Gesundheit Aargau**, 062 822 55 22, www.seges.ch
  The centre in Aarau provides free and confidential advice to victims.
- **Frauenklinik Kantonsspital Aarau**, 062 838 50 63 or tel. 062 838 50 70, www.ksa.ch
  Advice, gynaecological examinations and defibulation in pregnancy. If necessary, a translation service can be organised.
- **Caritas Schweiz**, 041 419 23 55, www.caritas.ch
  Caritas Schweiz provides free and confidential advice to families affected.
- **Opferberatung Aargau**, 062 835 47 90, www.opferberatung-ag.ch
  The Aargau victim counselling service can also provide support.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-aargau.ch/en/haeusliche-gewalt/zwangsheirat-und-madchenbeschneidung