

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SAVE THE CHILDREN CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN AGAINST FGM/C

Mogadishu, September 16th, 2018. Save the Children calls upon the government of Somalia, civil society and other community actors to take immediate action to scale up efforts to protect children, particularly girls, against all forms of violence and harmful traditional practices, including Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).

The call comes after a series of confirmed reports of deaths of young girls who have undergone FGM/C while others are still fighting for their lives in hospitals. On Thursday, September 13th, 2018, two sisters Aasiyo (10) and Khadijo (11) died two days after they were cut in a remote village of Dorodo, at the border between Ethiopia and Puntland State of Somalia. The girls died as they were taken to the hospital. Two months ago, 10-year-old Deqa Nour died of similar complications after going through an FGM procedure in her village.

Over seven other girls, between the ages of eight and five who were rescued by Save the Children staff after they were cut are currently being treated in different hospitals in Goldogob and Beletweyne. All the girls were bleeding excessively when they were brought to the hospital.

Despite all the efforts by the government and civil society actors to raise awareness on the risks and effects of FGM/C on the lives of girls, the practice continues unabated, putting the lives of millions of Somali girls at risk and robbing them of their right to a healthy and dignified childhood.

“I’m afraid that this is just the tip of the iceberg as many more cases go unreported,” said Timothy Bishop, Country Director of Save the Children in Somalia. “This can only be stopped if families and their communities say enough is enough – we should no longer continue to torture and risk the lives of our children.”

Bishop said that apart from the community efforts, stopping FGM/C requires stronger laws that will protect girls and allow the perpetrators of this harmful practice to be punished. Both the FGM policy and Sexual Offenses bill that promise stronger legal protection of Somali girls against FGM and other gender based violence are yet to be approved by the Federal Government.

Although FGM/C has been declining in Somalia from the mostly quoted figure of 98% to current 90%, more needs to be done to eliminate this practice. FGM/C violates the rights to health, security and physical integrity of the girls as well as the right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment, torture and cruelty, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.



Save the Children reaffirms its commitment to continue to support the government, civil society and communities at large to eradicate FGM/C practices. Save the Children works closely with local authorities, communities and the Government to raise awareness and ensure the right protection mechanisms are in place to address FGM/C in Somalia.

Ends..

For more information contact:

1. Jamillah Mwanjisi

Head of Communication and Media – Save the Children Somalia

Email: Jamillah.mwanjisi@savethechildren.org

Tel: +254 720043823

2. Said Mohamud Isse

Communications Coordinator – Puntland

Said.isse@savethechildren.org

+252907847640

3. Mohamed Muhidin

Communications Coordinator – Southern States

Mohamed.muhidin@savethechildren.org

+252 61 8810713