



U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal Division

Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section

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MAY 27 2010

Mr. James W. Prescott, Ph. D
Institute of Humanistic Science
1140-23 Savannah Road
Lewes, Delaware 19958-1509

Dear Mr. Prescott:

This is in response to your October 10, 2009, letter to President Barack Obama in which you request that President Obama declare that the genital mutilation of children a form of torture, and that the United States support an international petition to the World Court which would ban this practice worldwide. Your letter has been referred to the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Department of Justice's Criminal Division for a response.

As you are already aware, female genital mutilation has a long history and deep roots in culture and tradition in the Islamic world. The practice of circumcising male children has many religious and cultural roots as well, but it is not internationally condemned like the procedure done on female children.

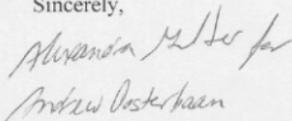
In 1996, the United States Congress outlawed female genital mutilation in the United States with the passage of 18 U.S.C. § 116. Congress has found this practice to be despicable and has made many pronouncements against it since outlawing it. The procedure is also outlawed in Britain, Canada, France, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Female genital mutilation has been internationally recognized as a violation of human rights; a global goal to end the practice has been set by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (UN General Assembly, 2002); policies and legislation to prohibit the practice have been put in place in many countries; and, there are indications that processes of social change leading to abandonment of the practice are under way in a number of countries.

The Department of Justice shares in your concern about the inhumane treatment girls and women receive worldwide and we will continue our efforts to combat human rights abuses through our continual dialogue and cooperation with other world nations.

Thank you for your letter to President Obama. We hope that you found this information helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew G. Oosterbaan".

Andrew G. Oosterbaan
Chief