

Forced and/or early marriages



DEFINITIONS

Forced marriage : any union, whether civil, religious or customary, in which at least one of the two persons has not given their free and full consent to the union, and has been subjected to threats and/or violence in order to force her into the union. Such violence and threats may be directed against the victim or against a third party close to the victim.

Early marriage : any marriage where at least one of the parties is under the age of 18. An early marriage is always considered forced, as a minor is considered incapable of giving consent to the marriage because of his or her young age.

KEY FIGURES

4%

4% of immigrant women living in France have experienced a non-consensual marriage. This concerns 2% of immigrant daughters born in France aged between 26 and 50.

12
millions

According to recent UNICEF figures, an estimated 12 million girls are married each year before they reach the age of 18. That's 1 girl every 3 seconds!

82%

In 82% of early marriages, the girl was underage. Early marriages therefore affect both girls and boys, but are more common among girls.

70 000

In France, it is estimated that around 70,000 minors are at risk of being forced into marriage during their lives.

ISSUES

Forced or early marriages have both harmful consequences :

- **on the victims** : **social consequences** (such as isolation, domestic violence or dropping out of school), **and health consequences** (such as early pregnancy and the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases)
- **and on society**: increased structural instability, perpetuation of gender inequalities, etc.



ISSUES



Various means can be used to force a person to marry: **physical, sexual or verbal violence, isolation, deception, etc.** Forced marriage often occurs in a context where other forms of violence already exist in the family.



Forced or early marriage can be linked to female genital mutilation (FGM): both are tools of domination that aim to control women's bodies and sexuality and, in many communities, **FGM is seen as a rite of passage to adulthood and a 'prerequisite' for forced or early marriage.**



Forced or early marriages are crimes and violations of human rights, which cannot be justified or regarded as private matters: these practices are punishable by law in France, even if the marriage is contracted abroad.

RESOURCES



The Voix de Femmes association runs a helpline for teenagers at risk of forced marriage: <https://asso-idf.hubertine.fr/voix-de-femmes>



The GAMS national federation provides information and guidance to victims and people at risk of forced and/or early marriage, and offers technical support to professionals: <https://federationgams.org/>



The government's "Arrêtons les violences" website offers specific resources on forced and early marriages: <https://arretonslesviolences.gouv.fr/besoin-d-aide/mariage-force>

Our training courses to find out more (French only) :

- **Specific forms of violence in a migratory context**
- **Vulnerabilities and asylum procedures**
- **Sexual and reproductive health of foreign women**