

# Woman, 39, convicted of assisting female genital mutilation on three-year-old British girl

*From the London Evening Standard*

This is the very first conviction of its kind in the UK

A woman has been convicted after she took a three-year-old girl from the UK to Kenya to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM).



Amina Noor, 39, was found guilty on Thursday at the Old Bailey, where jurors heard how the victim was forced to have her clitoris completely removed when she was just three years old, in 2006.

When the victim got older, she “formed a close relationship with her English teacher at school and, in November 2018, revealed she had been subjected to FGM,” prosecutor Deanna Heer KC said.

When spoken to, the defendant said she thought the procedure was just an injection and afterwards the girl was “happy and able to run around and play”. But when examined in 2019, it

emerged that in fact the girl's clitoris had been completely removed.

According to an initial account, Noor described going with another woman to a "clinic" where the girl was called into a room for a procedure. The defendant said she was invited in but refused because she was "scared and worried". Afterwards, the girl appeared quiet and cried the whole night and complained of pain, according to the account.

Jurors were told the defendant was born in Somalia and moved to Kenya at the age of eight during the civil war in her home country. She was aged 16 when she came to the UK and was later granted British citizenship.

The defendant described what had been done to the girl as "Sunnah", meaning "tradition" or "way" in Arabic, and said it was a practice that had gone on for cultural reasons for many years.

Ms Heer agreed it was widespread and "everyone had it done" in the defendant's community. "In fact, 87% of women and girls who had undergone FGM in Kenya had their genitalia cut, with some flesh removed," she said.

The court was told that 94 per cent of females of Somali origin living in Kenya undergo the procedure, according to United Nations figures.

This is the very first conviction of its kind under the FGM Act of 2003 and carries a maximum sentence of 14 years. To date, the only other successful prosecution was in 2019 when a Ugandan woman from Walthamstow, east London, was jailed for 11 years for cutting a three-year-old girl.

Ms Heer alleged Noor had "encouraged and assisted" in the offence and cast doubt on her claim that she only expected the girl to be "pricked" to draw blood.

Ms Heer said: "Not only was the procedure carried out upon (the girl), the excision of the clitoris, a very common type of FGM, but the defendant had been discussing precisely the kind of FGM before she took (the girl) to that clinic."

Giving evidence in her trial, Noor, from Harrow, north-west London, said she was threatened with being "cursed" and "disowned" within her community if she did not take part.

The alleged victim, who is now aged 21, cannot be identified for legal reasons.