

## **GAMCOTRAP TRAINED SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS ON THE EFFECT OF FGM.**



**The Gambia Police Officers were on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 trained on the effects of FGM and its health complications on women and girls at National Nutrition Agency Conference Hall.**

The purpose of this exercise is to educate senior police officers about the negative health effects of FGM and other related cultural practices that undermine women's and children's health. The participants consists of Senior Police and Child Welfare Officers within the Gambia Police Force (GPF)

In a brief explanation of the activity objectives, Marion Pop, Head of country component manager GIZ Police Programme states that, GIZ program's goal is to support and increase police capability in terms of crime prevention on matters linked to SGBV and FGM. She highlighted that the project is supported by the German Federal Fund Office and co-funded by European Union adding that the training and sensitization are to raise awareness of FGM.

According to Marion Pop, the primary goal of the GIZ initiative in the Gambia for the coming year is to combat FGM and SGBV. The GPF Police officers will receive training on the effects of FGM for the day from GAMCOTRAP, one of the top organizations in the Gambia working to eradicate FGM and violence against women and children. She ended by urging the officers to benefit from the training and work with the facilitators to learn more.

The Executive Director of GAMCOTRAP Dr. Isatou Touray also gave a welcoming statement to the senior police officers on behalf of the Board of Directors of GAMCOTRAP and the team, in her remarks. Dr. Isatou Touray stated that this activity is very important for Senior Police Officers to engage with GAMCOTRAP to discuss a very important topic that is a deeply ingrained culture in the Gambia and a sensitive subject that not everyone feels comfortable dealing with. She noted that this an opportunity for the police force to be sensitized about the effects of FGM on the sexual and reproductive health right of women and girls. The training is intended improve the law enforcement

officer's knowledge to gain knowledge about the effects of FGM and its complications on the health of women and girls. She stated that; the police must be empowered with the right information to be able to do their duties effectively as law enforcers whenever an issue on social norms emerges in their line of duty. She emphasized that it is very important for the Police officers to engage with **GAMCOTRAP** as a women's rights organization to discuss harmful practices that affect the health and wellbeing of women and girl-children and the role of the police in protecting them and work towards a better life and better health for women and girls. She further noted that as law enforcers they will be empowered with the existing legal instruments and conventions that promote and protect the rights of women and children. The Executive Director appreciated the opportunity given to the organization by **GIZ** to sensitize the police who are very critical in the effective implementation of the Law against FGM she concluded.

According to a police constable GPF and public relations officer Aja Fatou Jallow, the training has improved their understanding of the health effects of FGM. They initially were unaware of the ramifications of FGM, but after attending this program, their ignorance has been dispelled. As law enforcers, it is now their responsibility to safeguard the public and ensure that those who engage in FGM are held accountable for their crimes. She went on to say that it is crucial to work with **GAMCOTRAP** and **GIZ** as partner to educate the police and communities and people about the repercussions of FGM and to correct common misconceptions about the practice, which have to do more with culture than with religion.