

## TRADITION OR RELIGION? UNPACKING FEMALE CIRCUMCISION IN BUGIS-MAKASSAR CULTURE AND ISLAMIC LAW

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### Abstract

This study focused on female circumcision as a sacred practice among the Bugis-Makassar community, intertwined with various cultural and religious beliefs. It drew attention from both Islamic law and Bugis-Makassar cultural perspectives. The objective was to explore scholars' views on female circumcision and its connection to Bugis-Makassar culture through a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection methods included observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicated that within the context of Islamic law, female circumcision can be interpreted based on hadith and Sunnah, with varying opinions among Islamic scholars regarding its status as obligatory, recommended, or permissible, while some even oppose it. Despite these differing views, in communities like Bugis-Makassar, female circumcision is seen as an important cultural and traditional heritage. This practice was often accompanied by traditional ceremonies and religious rituals involving family and community. However, there were varied approaches to female circumcision within the Bugis-Makassar society, where some maintain this tradition with pride.

**Keywords:** Female Circumcision; Khitan; Bugis-Makassar; Islamic Law; Customary Law.

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### INTRODUCTION

Circumcision is still considered taboo to talk about, so like other sex education, the issue of circumcision is rarely found in formal forums. Up to now, female circumcision continues to be a problem. In Islamic law, circumcision is a teaching brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a continuation of the teachings of the Prophet Ibrahim AS.

In the matter of female circumcision, there is no evidence that *qati' dilalah* (indicates legal certainty), so there are differences of opinion among scholars. Circumcision for women is indicated as for men, regardless of the degree of law. This is as stated by Imam Ibn Taimiyah: some are obligatory, *some are sunnah*, and some are permissible. Thus, according to Sheikh Mahmud Syaltut, a scholar from Egypt, circumcision includes the matter of *ijtihad*.<sup>1</sup>

Controversy about female circumcision often arises both at home and abroad. These differences and debates occur for various reasons and different points of view. The cons could be due to a lack of information about Islamic teachings, a misrepresentation of Sharia circumcision for women, and perhaps also because they are anti-Islam. The implementation of female circumcision is also based on the principle of benefit, so it is permissible and even *sunnah*. On the other hand, if it causes negative effects (harm to women), such as eliminating women's sexual pleasure, then it is not permissible.<sup>2</sup>

When viewed from the perspective of the Shari'a, *maqasid al-Shari'ah* method is to bring benefit or reject harm or a combination of both.<sup>3</sup> A more strict and operational definition was put forward by Izzuddin bin Abd al-Salam, as stated by Ahmad Imam Mawardi.<sup>4</sup> However, it seems that many Muslims do not understand the law and benefits of female circumcision. Also, there are many rumors and propaganda from parties who continue to have the ambition to distance Muslims from the teachings of their own religion. Thus, there is a ban on female circumcision in several countries, including Indonesia.

However, the procedure for carrying out female circumcision, which is required by Islamic law, is different, namely by only removing the clitoral hood as stated by the Prophet as narrated by Ummu Athiyah, not to overdo it in circumcising girls, in order to get the expected benefits and avoid harm, which is feared to be dangerous. Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> Mahmud Syaltut, 'Hukumul Khitan', *Majallah Liwa Al-Islam*, 1.5 (1951).

<sup>2</sup> Lukman Hakim, 'Khitan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam', *Ar-Risalah: Media Keislaman, Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam*, 15.1 (2017), 139-47  
<<http://ejournal.iaiiibrahimy.ac.id/index.php/arrisalah/article/view/89>>.

<sup>3</sup> Wahyuddin Naro and others, 'Have Attitudes Towards Religiousness Shifted Due Covid 19 Outbreak? Evidence From Moslem Generations in Makassar-Indonesia', *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 18.3 (2021), 322-34.

<sup>4</sup> M. Ali Hasan, *Masail Fiqhiyah Al-Haditsah* (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996).

objections expressed by various groups regarding the implementation of female circumcision are inappropriate if it is carried out in the context of greater benefit by giving glory to women through controlling and channeling their libido.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that the Prophet Muhammad never wanted the implementation of circumcision that tortured women. In fact, he corrected the tradition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that occurred in Arab society at that time. The understanding of religious texts that are discriminatory and patriarchal in Islam cannot be justified because this view provides a view that is contradictory to the vision of equality and human dignity. There is certainly nothing wrong with the contradiction of God's word as contained in the word of Allah SWT. In Q.S. Fushilat verse 42.<sup>6</sup> The Indonesian government itself took the WHO policy not to allow any provisions for circumcision for women because it was considered contrary to human rights. This is evidenced by the issuance of a Circular Letter from the Director General of Public Health Development, Ministry of Health, on April 20, 2006, concerning the Prohibition of Medicalization of Female Circumcision.

However, the government also cannot directly prohibit Muslims because, in reality, the provision of female circumcision continues in society and is believed to be a minimum obligation of the Prophet Muhammad's *Sunnah*, so the Indonesian Ulama Council (IUC) fatwa circulated regarding the permissibility of female circumcision in 2008 to answer this circumcision issue as long as it is in accordance with health and medical standards. Of course, this is contrary to the Circular of the Ministry of Health, which actually prohibits the practice of female circumcision. This is what causes overlapping regulations in Indonesia regarding policies taken by the government. Not long after, in 2010, the Ministry of Health issued a regulation, namely Regulation of the Minister of Health Number 1636 of 2010, concerning Female Circumcision, which contains instructions for medical experts in carrying out female circumcision and the legal authority for medical experts to carry out female circumcision if requested by the patient (for parents whose children will be circumcised). This is what has reignited the controversy over the issue of

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<sup>5</sup> Agus Hermanto, 'Khitan Perempuan Antara Tradisi Dan Syari'ah', 10.1 (2016), 257-94.

<sup>6</sup> Ashabul Fadhli, 'Meramu Ketentuan Hukum Islam Terkait Khitan Perempuan', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, 14.1 (2016), 47 <<https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v14i1.296>>.

female circumcision for those who are against it and view the Minister of Health Regulation as a policy that opens up opportunities and authority for medical personnel to perform female circumcision services and as a form of legality for female circumcision in Indonesia.<sup>7</sup>

Then, what about the attitude of the community in facing the problem of female circumcision? It is not uncommon for people who still maintain the command of the Prophet Muhammad to circumcise their daughters either with the concept of tradition, health, religious orders, or just carrying out the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad. Also, what makes people in some areas of Indonesia continue to perpetuate this circumcision teaching.

## **METHOD**

This study used qualitative research. The researcher focused on collecting data in the form of text obtained from informants in the field and data obtained from websites or the internet. The research locations were Pare-Pare City and Sinjai Regency. These two areas were representatives of areas in South Sulawesi. This was because of its strategic location, allowing the researcher to reach circumcision events in the Bugis and Makassar areas of South Sulawesi. In this study, the researcher collected data in more depth using observation methods, activity documentation, and interviews with several related parties who were the main informants in this study, which were then analyzed and described in the form of descriptions.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Female Circumcision and the Law of Its Implementation**

#### **a. Definition of Circumcision in Language**

Linguistically, the word circumcise or circumcision in Arabic comes from the word (*khatana-yakhtinu-khatanan*), which literally means circumcision/cutting.<sup>8</sup> While the word *al-khatnu* with *fatha* on *kha'* and *sukun* on *ta* contains two words, namely circumcise, circumcised boys can also be called *I'dzar*, which is cutting part of the male penis. There

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<sup>7</sup> Agus Hermanto, 'Khitan Perempuan Antara Tradisi Dan Syari'ah', 10.1 (2016)

<sup>8</sup> Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Penyelenggara Penterjemah, 1973). h. 114.

are also those who specialize in the term *circumcise*, namely the term for men and the term *khfadh* for women.<sup>9</sup>

Abu Ubaidah, as stated by Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, said that if it is said "*Adzartul Jariyah wal Ghulaam*", it means I circumcise girls and boys. The words *adzara* and *khatana* have similar word patterns and meaning.<sup>10</sup>

b. Definition of circumcision in terminology

Terminologically, the definition of circumcision in fiqh terms is distinguished between men and women. According to Imam al-Mawardi, a fiqh scholar of the Syafi'i school, circumcision for women is removing the uppermost part of the vagina, namely the tip of the clitoris or a small lump of tissue located at the tip of the vulva (clitoris) hole at the top of the female genitals, which is like a date seed or a rooster's comb.<sup>11</sup> The cutting should only be done on the upper part and not cutting the entire clitoris. In medical terms, it is called circumcision. According to Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary, Circumcision is the cutting of the praeputium or front clitoris. Female c., any way, either cutting the external part of the female genitalia or infibulation. Pharaonic c., a type of circumcision in women consisting of two ways: a radical method in which the clitoris, labia minora, and labia majora are removed and the remaining tissue is approximated, and a modified form, in which the foreskin and glans clitoris and the area adjacent to the labia minora are removed. *Sunna* c., a form of circumcision in women in which the foreskin of the clitoris is removed.<sup>12</sup>

The procedure for carrying out female circumcision, as required by Islamic law, is only to remove the clitoral hood as the Prophet Muhammad said, as narrated by Umm Atiyah, "*There was a woman who used to perform circumcision (on girls) in Medina, so the Prophet said, " Do not cut severely, as that is better for a woman and more desirable to a husband."*

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<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, ed. by Abdu al Salam Muhammad Harun (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Amiruddin, *Ibnu Hajar Al-Asqalani Edisi Indonesia: Fathul Baari*, 28 (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2011). h. 758.

<sup>11</sup> Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Al-Nisaburi, *Sahih Muslim Bi Syarh Al-Nawawi*, ed. by Isam Al-Sababithi, Vol. 3 (Cairo: Dar al-Hadits, 2005). h. 148.

<sup>12</sup> Ahmad Lutfi Fatahullah, *Fiqih Khitan Perempuan* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2003). h. 302-303.

In the history of Abi Daud, it is narrated that he said, "*Just cut it thinly and don't overdo it because it brightens the face and is part of the husband's pleasure.*"<sup>13</sup>

If viewed from the term circumcision in terms of terminology, both in terms of fiqh and medicine, the author concludes that circumcision should be done in a light way, namely by removing the tip of the clitoris (smegma) in accordance with the advice of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the hadith above. In order to get benefits and avoid the risks or harms of female circumcision.<sup>14</sup>

### c. History of Circumcision in the Islamic Field

The person who first performed circumcision was the Prophet Ibrahim AS. This is as explained by the hadith of Rasulullah SAW, which was narrated by al-Bukhori, Muslim, Ahmad and others from Hurairah saying "From Abu Hurairah Rasulullah SAW said Ibrahim AS: Circumcision, when he was 80 years old with a small axe." (HR Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim and Baihaqi), was circumcised, the Prophet Ismail was circumcised when he was 13 years old, while the Prophet Ishaq was circumcised at the age of 7 days.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike women, after Islam came, both in Mecca and Medina, men were certainly circumcised. The existence of commands or explanations from the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which are quite numerous and clear, although some of them are *da'if* hadiths, shows this. Moreover, many narrations explain that Hasan and Husain, two grandsons of the Prophet SAW, were circumcised on the seventh day of their birth.<sup>16</sup>

The concept of circumcision is usually carried out on the basis of religious teachings, not only in Islam but also in several other religions. However, what is dominant in Islamic and Jewish societies is that circumcision is a religious command that must be carried out. Circumcision is a traditional religious ritual that existed before Islam, with various forms

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<sup>13</sup> Ulfah Hidayah, 'Persepsi Dan Tradisi Khitan Perempuan Di Masyarakat Pasir Buah Karawang: Pendekatan Hukum Islam' (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2014), h.26-28 <<http://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/27254>>.

<sup>14</sup> Hery Purwosusanto, 'Khitan, Perempuan Dan Kekerasan Seksual', *Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak*, 7.02 (2020), 115 <<https://doi.org/10.32678/jsga.v7i02.180>>.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Hafiz al-Jalil ibn Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husain ibn Ali Al-Baihaqi, *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (Makkah: Dar Al-Baz, 1994). h. 326.

<sup>16</sup> Sarah Santi, 'Khitan Perempuan: Legitimasi Agama Dan Budaya Atas Kekerasan Dan Pengendalian Tubuh Perempuan', *Forum Ilmiah Indonusa*, 3.1 (2006), 1-9.

ranging from just a symbol of cleaning, poking, and cleaning dirt to the destruction of female genitals.<sup>17</sup>

However, in the Islamic religion, the requirements for circumcision in Islam in its philosophy teach the principles of cleanliness, purity, health, and fitness by emulating the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the Qur'an, Allah SWT says: Indeed, Allah loves those who always turn to Him in repentance and those who purify themselves (QS.Al-Baqarah: 222).

Circumcision in Islam is intended as proof of belief that someone has become a Muslim. This circumcision was originally applied only to men by cutting the foreskin of their genitals when they wanted to become Muslims. Although this circumcision practice, before Islam was born, had developed among the Arab tribes during the Lamristen Pau period. It is even required in Judaism and Christianity; before Islam appeared, the practice of circumcision also existed in other countries, such as in Africa, Asia, and Europe in ancient times.<sup>18</sup>

Based on the history mentioned above, the author argues that it is very clear that circumcision has existed since the time of Prophet Ibrahim AS as a command from Allah SWT. Rasulullah SAW continued the order of circumcision law, which was explained in the hadith. Although the strength of the hadith is weak, it has been narrated by many narrators who support the validity of the hadith. Thus, the hadith about the female circumcision law can be accepted.

#### d. Islamic Perspective on Circumcision

Sheikh Mahmud Syaltut stated, as stated by Mayam Ibrahim Hindi, that circumcision is a matter of *ijtihad*. However, *fiqh* experts agree on the legality of female circumcision in Islamic law. The proof is that the books of the four *fiqh* experts mention differences of opinion regarding the obligatory or *sunnah* status of female circumcision. None of them

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Sauki, 'Khitan Perempuan Perspektif Hadis Dan Sirkumsisi Perempuan Menurut WHO', *Skripsi* (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2010) <<http://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/4716>>.

<sup>18</sup> Masayu Mashita Maisarah, 'Polemik Khitan Perempuan: Tinjauan Dari Berbagai Aspek', *Jurnal Al-Huda*, 7 (2015), 69–96.

classify it as prohibited (*haram*) or disliked (*makruh*).<sup>19</sup> The following is an explanation of the opinions regarding its legal status.

### 1) Obligatory

Circumcision, from the perspective of Imam Ash-Syafi'i, is obligatory. Imam Syafi'i thinks that circumcision is obligatory, both for men and women. Imam Yahya, the scholars of *Itrah*, Al-Syafi'I, and a group of scholars have determined that circumcision is obligatory for both men and women.<sup>20</sup>

Mansur bin Yusuf al-Buhuti said, "Circumcision is obligatory for humans when entering puberty, while not worrying about his own safety, whether for men, sissy or women. While Ibrahim bin Dhayan said, "Circumcision is obligatory for men and women."<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, a strong opinion comes from contemporary scholar Saleh al-Fauzan. This fiqh expert from Saudi Arabia stated that female circumcision is obligatory and must be done from childhood.<sup>22</sup>

### 2) *Sunnah*

As stated by T.M Hasybi Ash-Siddieqi: "Abu Hanifah, Malik, and Murtada said: "Circumcision is recommended (*sunnah*) for men and women." This evidence emphasizes that the hadith that confirms the obligation of circumcision does not exist. Thus, it is determined that circumcision is judged as a *sunnah*.<sup>23</sup>

Circumcision for women is *sunnah* because, in the hadith, it is mentioned together with practices whose legal status is *sunnah*, such as cutting the mustache, cutting nails, and so on, so circumcision is also ruled as *sunnah* like other natural practices. This *fitriah* is interpreted as meaning *sunnah*, or good habits. This would mean that the five things expressed are only good habits recommended by religion. The impact is that the law of circumcision for both men and women is recommended. The form (*sighah*) also uses a

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<sup>19</sup> Maryam Ibrahim Hindi, *Misteri Di Balik Khitan Wanita*, ed. by Abu Nabil (Solo: Penerbit Zam-Zam, 2008). h. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Aisyatul Azizah, 'Status Hukum Khitan Perempuan (Perdebatan Pandangan Ulama Dan Permenkes RI No.1636/MENKES/PER/XI/2010)', *Musāwa*, 19.2 (2020).

<sup>21</sup> Syaikh Manshur bin Yusuf, *Al-Raudul Murbi* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1985). h. 19.

<sup>22</sup> Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Politik HAM, Dan Isu-Isu Teknologi Dalam Fiqih Kontemporer* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1998). h. 125.

<sup>23</sup> T.M. Hasbi Ash-Shaddieqy, *Hukum-Hukum Fiqih Islam* (Kelantang: : Pustaka Aman Press, 1987). h. 362.



general form. Therefore, women are included in those who are ordered. The reason is that *fitrah*, or religion, with its teachings, is aimed at men and women.<sup>24</sup>

### 3) Permissible (*Mubah*)

According to the Hanafi-Hanbali Mazhab, circumcision for women is only an honor or glory. Thus, circumcision for women is permissible. Muhammad Syams al-Haq al-Azim, in the book *Aun al-Ma'bud Syarh Sunan Abi Dawud*, explains several opinions of female circumcision scholars based on this hadith: there are differences between the women of *al-Masyriq* (Eastern region) and the women of *al-Maghrib* (Western region). Western women do not need to be circumcised because no excess in their private parts can be cut as prescribed by the law. In this case, there is no explanation regarding the law on female circumcision. For those/women who from birth have no extra flesh to circumcise, then they do not need to be circumcised, whether she is in the *al-Maghrib* or *al-Masyriq* areas.<sup>25</sup>

However, if they want to perform circumcision, then it is permissible, and the law is *mubah*. With all the notes contained in the law of this hadith, namely its negativity, then textually, the *taklifi* law that can be concluded is that the law of circumcision for men is *sunnah*, and the law of circumcision for women is disliked (*makrumah*). In the popular *taklifi* law, five terms are known whose hierarchical order is as follows: Obligatory; *Sunnah*; Permissible; *Makruh*; Prohibited.

The term *makrumah* is very rarely used. The position of *makrumah* in the hierarchy of *taklifi* law becomes a question because, in that order, there is no law called the term *makrumah* as mentioned in the hadiths about circumcision.<sup>26</sup>

If *makrumah* is placed in the position of *sunnah*, why did the Messenger of Allah not combine it directly by saying *sunnah li al-rijal wa al-nisa*. Or, if it is permissible, then the usual word used is used, such as *ja'iz*. However, the separation in the text of the hadith

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<sup>24</sup> Ashabul Fadhli, 'Meramu Ketentuan Hukum Islam Terkait Khitan Perempuan', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, 14.1 (2016).

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Lutfi Fathullah, *Fiqh Khitan Perempuan*, h.45

<sup>26</sup> Lukman Hakim, 'Khitan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam', *Ar-Risalah: Media Keislaman, Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam*, 15.1 (2017)

shows a clear difference in the law between men and women.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, putting it in the permissible position is more appropriate. However, it must also be explained that there is a plus value because there is an implicit meaning in the word *makrumah*, which is not permissible.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the explanation above, the author concludes that there is no evidence of a *qath'I dilalah* (indicating the certainty of law) regarding the law of circumcision, obligatory, *sunnah*, or *mustahabbah*. Therefore, circumcision for women has been outlined by religion.

## **2. Wisdom and Benefits of Female Circumcision**

### **a. Circumcision has a religious value.**

Circumcision is the basis of *fitrah*, *syiar*, and *shari'ah*. Circumcision is one of the issues that bring perfection to *al-Din* as prescribed by Allah SWT through the words of Prophet Ibrahim AS as contained in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl verse 123. Circumcision is also a statement of '*Ubudiyyah* towards Allah SWT – obedience to orders, laws, and authority.<sup>29</sup>

### **b. Circumcision can balance women's sexual libido and can brighten the face**

The purpose of female circumcision is to control her lust. If a woman is left uncircumcised, she will have enormous lust. However, if circumcision is carried out excessively, the sexual desire will be weakened so that the husband's desire (in intimate relations) cannot be perfect.<sup>30</sup>

### **c. Circumcision for women is a form of self-honor**

Circumcision in tradition is believed to reduce women's sexual aggression. Therefore, circumcision seems more appropriate, women are considered honorable by the culture at that time.<sup>31</sup>

### **d. Circumcision is a way to differentiate Muslims from followers of other religions.**

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<sup>27</sup> Erwin Hafid, Baso Pallawagau, and Ummi Farhah, 'Malaqbiq: Indeginious Living Tradition in Mandar Ethnic West Sulawesi-Indonesia Toward Disruption Era', *Jurnal Adabiyah*, 22.2 (2022) <<https://journal3.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/adabiyah/article/view/31613/16534>>.

<sup>28</sup> Ashabul Fadhli, 'Meramu Ketentuan Hukum Islam Terkait Khitan Perempuan', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, 14.1 (2016)

<sup>29</sup> Hasan.. h. 181-182.

<sup>30</sup> Muhamad Mustaqim, 'Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Budaya Khitan Perempuan: Pergulatan Antara Tradisi, Keberagamaan Dan Kekerasan Seksual Di Jawa', *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender*, 6.1 (2016), 89-106.

<sup>31</sup> Abudin Nata, *Kajian Tematik Al-Quran Tentang Fiqih Ibadah* (Bandung: Angkasa, 2008). h. 309.

General circumcision is intended to protect health. In essence, circumcision means purity and cleanliness from dirt and disease. Circumcision is one of the most important forms of health education in Islam – especially the health of the genitals so that they are always protected from uncleanness and behavioral impurities.<sup>32</sup>

Can prevent cancer. According to Ali Akbar, as mentioned by Maryam Ibrahim Hindi, uncircumcised women can cause disease to their husbands (partners) when having sex. This is because their clitoris secretes smegma which smells bad and can stimulate the emergence of cancer in the male penis and cancer in the female cervix. Thus, inside it lives pests and viruses that cause cancer. Hinselman also believes that uncircumcised men can cause cervical cancer in their female partners.<sup>33</sup>

Hamid al-Ghawabi's opinion in his article entitled "*Female Circumcision in Religious and Medical Perspective*" discusses the benefits of circumcision for women from a medical perspective, as mentioned by Maryam Ibrahim Hindi.<sup>34</sup>

The mucus fluid that comes out of the inner pair of labia, if both are not cut together with the tip of the clitoris during the circumcision process, will accumulate and rot until it produces an unpleasant odor and is susceptible to infection, which sometimes spreads to the vagina, or even to the urinary tract (urethra).

Circumcision cuts serve to reduce the level of sexual sensitivity of girls, where they no longer have an organ that can cause arousal just by touching it. That way, children will not be easily nervous from a young age, as the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW when he stated that circumcision is an honor for women as well as brightening the face if the clitoris is not removed in its entirety in the circumcision process. If not, then women will be easily nervous, and their faces will be pale. Circumcision is recommended to be carried out by experienced medical experts.<sup>35</sup>

Muhammad Ali Al-Bar believes that circumcision is *sunnah* and has many benefits. He said that for women, it is *sunnah*. It is done by cutting a small part of the clitoris. The clitoris that women have is like the penis in men. It's just that it is very small and does

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<sup>32</sup> Tutung Nurdiyana, 'Sunat Perempuan Pada Masyarakat Banjar Di Kota Banjarmasin', *KOMUNITAS*, 2.2 (2010), 116–24 <<https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v2i2.2281>>.

<sup>33</sup> Hasan.. h.183.

<sup>34</sup> Maryam Ibrahim Hindi, *Misteri Di Balik Khitan Wanita*, ed. by Abu Nabil h. 71.

<sup>35</sup> Azizah.

not have a urinary tract. At the tip of the clitoris, there is a foreskin; although it is very small, it is dangerous, like the foreskin that men have. Because in this skin, fluid accumulates and becomes a nest for microbial growth. The clitoris is a very sensitive organ, like the tip of the penis. This organ can also get an erection. There is no doubt that this organ is very effective in increasing libido and lust. Thus, it can be classified as a trigger for adultery if you are unable to control your lust. However, the Prophet Muhammad SAW ordered female circumcisers to remove a small part of the clitoris and not cut it all so that the woman does not experience frigidity.<sup>36</sup>

As long as the implementation of female circumcision is carried out in accordance with the correct method and procedure, both from the perspective of Islamic law according to the teachings of the Prophet and from the medical perspective. In fact, female circumcision will get benefits according to what is believed and expected by the female circumcision perpetrator. And avoid the harm that has been a concern for many parties regarding female circumcision.

### **3. The decision of the Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC) Fatwa Number 9A of 2008**

The Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC) and a number of Islamic mass organizations reject efforts to ban female circumcision by any party. Islam has also regulated the procedures for female circumcision, which are in accordance with the teachings of the Messenger of Allah SAW in the hadith narrated by Ummu Atiyah. According to the IUC, circumcision is part of Islamic teachings that are highly recommended to be carried out by men and women. The IUC issued Fatwa Number 9A of 2008, the essence of which is that female circumcision is a recommended worship.

According to Asroruniam Saleh, the issue of circumcision is not medical terminology but religious terminology, so determining whether it is permissible or not is not due to medical considerations but religious considerations. Then, its implementation must pay attention to life safety rules and prevent dangerous things from happening.<sup>37</sup>

Likewise, Salah Ghaul was stated and also mentioned by Sheikh Jadul Haq, as mentioned by Maryam Ibrahim Hindi. He explained in the implementation of

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<sup>36</sup> Sarah Santi.

<sup>37</sup> Anton Septian, 'MUI Anggap Sunat Perempuan Sesuai UUD 1945', *TEMPO.CO* (Jakarta, January 2013) <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/455861/mui-anggap-sunat-perempuan-sesuai-uud-1945>>.

circumcision, "It is not permissible to leave the guidance and teachings of Rasulullah SAW to take the words of others then, even though he is a doctor. Because medicine is a science, the character of science is always developing. The proof of this statement's truth is that doctors' opinions on this matter vary."<sup>38</sup>

From the IUC decision on the Law Prohibiting Female Circumcision, the author agrees with the government's actions and attitudes in dealing with the polemic of female circumcision in Indonesia. The issuance of the Minister of Health Regulation Number 1636 of 2010 concerning Female Circumcision and the IUC Decree Number 9A of 2008 concerning the Law Prohibiting Female Circumcision is a balanced and wise government policy that we must support. In fact, female circumcision in Islam is a teaching commanded by the Shari'a. However, the law of its implementation varies depending on the problems that will be achieved by each individual and is not a necessity that, if abandoned, will result in sin. The IUC itself stated that the law of female circumcision is good teaching in carrying out religious orders.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4. Female Circumcision from the Bugis-Makassar Perspective**

The perspective of Bugis-Makassar people in Indonesia in general towards the practice of female circumcision varies. The tradition of female circumcision, known as female circumcision, has become a topic of debate in many societies, including in Indonesia. Several views have emerged according to the Makassar people, including:

a. Cultural and Traditional Aspects:

Some people in the Makassar Tribe see female circumcision as part of tradition and culture. Some families continue this practice because it is considered a cultural heritage or hereditary custom.

Sainal: "*kebiasaanna memang tau toayya anggaukangi sunna' ana' baine*" (It is indeed a custom or culture to circumcise girls.)<sup>40</sup>

Some Bugis people see female circumcision as part of a cultural tradition passed down from generation to generation.

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<sup>38</sup> Maryam Ibrahim Hindi, *Misteri Di Balik Khitan Wanita*, ed. by Abu Nabil.

<sup>39</sup> Azizah.

<sup>40</sup> Sainal, 'Wawancara' (Sinjai, 08/12/2022).

Isainabe: "*Abiasangenna tomatoatta fole riolo mairo makkatte, mancaji sennung-sennungenna ana wija darae', engka assabarena narikatte pake billa tebbu, nasaba tebbue' macenning, mamuarei iyaro anak makkunraiyye, simata macenninngi namasija botting*" (It is a hereditary custom for parents to circumcise females, so there is a philosophical basis for prayers for goodness for girls. Girls are circumcised using sugar cane because sugar cane is sweet; circumcised girls are also sweet, so they can quickly find a partner).<sup>41</sup>

b. Religious Aspects:

In the Makassar community, some views are related to religious aspects. Some families see female circumcision as part of religion, although this approach can vary between religious groups.

Nenna: "*Jai keluarga anggaukangi sunna' ana' baine saba' memang parentana nabitta*" (Many families perform female circumcision because it is a religious order through Rasulullah SAW).<sup>42</sup>

c. Health:

Some communities in Indonesia, such as the Makassar Tribe, view the practice of female circumcision as part of health.

Sitti: "*Jai keluarga anggaukangi sunna' ana' baine saba' nia baji'na*" (Many families perform female circumcision because it is good for health).<sup>43</sup>

In some cases, this practice can be seen as a form of initiation or religious ceremony that marks a woman's adulthood. This view is often related to certain religious beliefs emphasizing the importance of maintaining purity or piety.

Sanro: "*Iyaro katte'e iyasettoi sunna iyarega ifaselleng, nasaba akkacoereng rinabitta, naiyya ifassahadatoi, tanranna mattugengkeng asellengenna*" (Circumcision is called *sunnah* and also called Islamization, because during the circumcision process, women say two sentences of the shahada as a sign of strong Islam).<sup>44</sup>

However, as mentioned earlier, this view is not necessarily homogeneous among all Bugis people. Some Bugis people may be more critical of the practice of female

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<sup>41</sup> Isainabe, 'Wawancara' (Parepare, 29/12/2022).

<sup>42</sup> Nenna, 'Wawancara' (Sinjai, 08/12/2022).

<sup>43</sup> Sitti, 'Wawancara' (Sinjai, 08/12/2022).

<sup>44</sup> Sanro, 'Wawancara' (Parepare, 29/12/2022).

circumcision and question its relevance in a modern context. They may consider it a practice that can endanger women's health or even involve human rights violations, especially if it is carried out without clear consent or regard to the principles of safety and sterilization.<sup>45</sup>

In recent years, debates about female circumcision in Indonesia and around the world have intensified, involving aspects such as children's rights, health, and human rights. Some countries and communities have taken steps to regulate or ban the practice, while others may still maintain it as part of their cultural or religious identity.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to remember that individual and societal views towards female circumcision can vary greatly, and these differences may reflect the complex dynamics between tradition, religion, and social change within Bugis or other societies.

## CONCLUSION

Female circumcision in Islamic law is often considered as sunnah or recommended, although there are differences of opinion among scholars regarding whether it is obligatory or not. Some scholars state that female circumcision can provide health benefits and maintain purity, although there is no explicit evidence that orders female circumcision in the Al-Qur'an. Female circumcision in Bugis-Makassar culture is often related to religious traditions and customs that have been passed down from generation to generation. At the cultural level, female circumcision can be considered a symbol of maturity and identity of the Bugis-Makassar tribe, reflecting the values of cleanliness and obedience to customs. Both from the perspective of Islamic law and Bugis-Makassar culture, female circumcision can be considered as an action to maintain the health and well-being of women. However, the methods and objectives can vary. Despite its acceptance in society, female circumcision has also created controversy and debate, especially at the global level, where some have criticized it as an unreasonable practice that is detrimental to women. Thus, female circumcision from the perspective of Islamic

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<sup>45</sup> Tutung Nurdiyana, 'Sunat Perempuan Pada Masyarakat Banjar Di Kota Banjarmasin', *KOMUNITAS*, 2.2 (2010).

<sup>46</sup> Muhamad Mustaqim, 'Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Budaya Khitan Perempuan: Pergulatan Antara Tradisi, Keberagamaan Dan Kekerasan Seksual Di Jawa', *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender*, 6.1 (2016).

law and Bugis-Makassar culture reflects the complexity of the relationship between religion, tradition, and cultural norms that have been formed over the years. Debate continues regarding the sustainability and relevance of this practice in modern social and health contexts. Certainly, further research is still needed on female circumcision from various aspects.

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