

# Milah UK

Justice for Men & Boys  
Kemp House  
152 City Road  
London  
EC1V 2 NX

27<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Dear Mr Buchanan,

Milah UK is the campaign group set up by the organisations of the Jewish community in the UK to promote and protect the right of the Jewish community to carry out religious circumcisions in accordance with our religious beliefs.

We are aware that you have sent a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July to many Jewish institutions including the Office of the Chief Rabbi and the Board of Deputies. This letter has been handed to us as the organisation responsible for the defence of religious circumcision.

The source for circumcising boys at eight days old is the commandment in the Old Testament (Gen. 17:10-14 and Lev. 12:3). It is done as a physical sign of one's Jewish identity and is probably the most widely observed of all Jewish practices. It is for this reason alone that Brit Milah has become not just a religious requirement, but perhaps the most important, recognisable and indeed celebrated element of Jewish culture.

Your comparison between the religious circumcision of boys and Female Genital Mutilation is deeply flawed. These two practices could not be more different.

Female Genital Mutilation involves the partial or complete removal of the genitalia. The result can make intercourse extremely difficult and or painful and can be the cause of a number of serious medical complications including haemorrhage, urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, tetanus and hepatitis.

Brit Milah is a minor procedure, carried out by a trained practitioner in a clean environment and has no recognised negative impact on the child or on the rest of his life. Of course there are risks associated with any such procedure but complications arising from Brit Milah are not mutilating, and are usually negligible.

For these reasons, just as carrying out Brit Milah is a requirement of Jewish law, carrying out Female Genital Mutilation would be an extremely serious breach of Jewish law.

Thank you for your letter and we hope that we have provided you with a satisfactory response.

Yours sincerely,



**Prof. David Katz**  
**Co-Chairman**



**Dr. Simon Hochhauser**  
**Co-Chairman**

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