



Documentary

Desert Tears



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It is a terrifying ritual performed on young girls every eleven seconds worldwide: female genital mutilation, frequently accomplished with only a razor blade or a piece of glass. The victims endure excruciating pain - and death is not uncommon. Women who have not undergone this mutilation are destined to become social outcasts.

A group of human rights activists want to end this horrifying 5,000-year-old practice. Teaming up with Islamic scholars, they hope to end the suffering by reaching out to the masses through Islam. Not only has this ritual been declared sinful by the Muftis at the "Fatwa of Cairo" in 2006. According to the Koran, female genital mutilation is a crime! But despite the Fatwa being widely circulated in Ethiopia's capital Addis Abeba, it is still being practiced.



On April 15th, 2009, 100 Imams and religious leaders from numerous countries in East Africa convene in Addis Abeba. Among them are several supporters of female genital mutilation. Ten-year-old Eri takes her turn onstage, relating the horrific details of the most dreadful experience of her life. While many of the Imams are shamed, others are angered they have to endure hearing Eri's story.

It soon appears the conference has failed its purpose. An opposition has formed that attempts to differentiate between the "Pharaonic" ritual - the most brutal form of mutilation that kills a third of its young victims - and the "Sunnite" form, where supposedly only the foreskin of the clitoris is removed as in male circumcision. The hardliners regard the latter as an "honoring" of the female gender and want to continue its use.



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Documentary, 1 x 55'

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