

The Law that No One Reads

by Gian Stefano Spoto*

UGHJ is a sense of reality. The multilingual platform serves to make the concepts exposed part of everyone's daily life, to combine science and society with the greatest possible concreteness.

The recent conference on female genital mutilation, with the contributions that follow, is a search for solutions, in the awareness of the immense difficulty of opposing centuries-old traditions and tribal intrigues. These often escape façade laws, promulgated by virtue of their form and diplomatic flair, but meant to be ignored. One instance is the law applied in Sudan, which condemns to three years of imprisonment those who practice female circumcision.

On this immense theme, the Islamist Massimo Papa

explains what can be attempted and what cannot even be imagined, navigating between law and religion. He ultimately demonstrates the extreme difficulty of extending to all countries the *ubi societas, ubi jus* principle, a fundamental one for us. Even more difficult it is to attempt to apply this principle. Infibulation is then seen as a social scourge, but also as a serious health problem, which claims several victims whose numbers are impossible to calculate, mainly due to the code of silence that permeates these practices.

When UGHJ was born, the primary idea was to face and analyze the obstacles that hinder the right to health in the world. This would be possible not only by dealing with health policies, but above all by trying to understand, from time to

time, which tools, with the aid of technology, could make up for dramatic shortages.

Nigeria can be taken as an example of a country which is certainly not among the last ones on the African continent, and where 82% of the rural population is excluded from health services. This gives an idea of a situation in which the few operators that are present tend to move to urban centers or emigrate to countries where the work is less tiring, better organized and above all well paid. This generates a health workforce of less than two units per thousand inhabitants, a fact aggravated by strong inequalities in the distribution on the territory.

Brain drain is the result of all this. We see it happening in Nigeria, but also in Ghana and Zimbabwe, just to give two

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examples. In addition to this, there is a scarcity of economic resources: despite the increase in Western aid, an African country rarely manages to spend 15% of public spending on health care.

Stateless people in the world are another issue not sufficiently addressed: how many there are, how they live and who takes care of them. This fact opens the analysis of other problems, obviously

not only of stateless persons. This analysis, indeed, revolves around the mirage of universal health coverage: WHO estimates predict, among other things, a deficit of eighteen million health workers, especially in countries with low-middle income.

Social networks have on occasion the merit of spreading sometimes semi-unknown situations by making them public domain. This would

indeed be commendable if the news weren't often taken to extremes, manipulated, enslaved to preconceived theses. Our journal is exactly the opposite: it is intended for those who want to contribute, in any area and measure, to the solution of problems, even if in this magnum sea the term solution already appears dreamlike.

UGHJ's dream is instead a network in which words are always followed by actions.