



PROTECTING RELIGIOUS CIRCUMCISION IN BELGIUM

Policy Position of the European Jewish Association

June 24, 2026 - Belgium is facing a test of religious freedom, minority rights and democratic proportionality. For Jewish families, *Brit Milah* is a central religious obligation and one of the oldest foundations of Jewish identity. For Muslim communities, circumcision is also an important religious and cultural practice. Any attempt to criminalise or legally restrict trained religious practitioners from performing circumcision would affect the future of religious life in Belgium.

The European Jewish Association believes that **child welfare, medical safety and religious freedom can and must coexist**. The question is not whether circumcision should remain legal. The real question is whether a lawful, centuries-old religious practice, carried out by trained and experienced religious practitioners, should be subject to criminal prosecution despite the absence of a demonstrated public-health crisis, widespread injuries, parental complaints, identifiable victims or evidence of systemic harm.

Public policy must be evidence-based, proportionate and respectful of fundamental freedoms. Circumcision should be performed safely, hygienically and by competent practitioners. But religious practice should not be treated as a criminal matter when regulation, training, certification and oversight are more appropriate and effective tools.

Religious freedom means more than the right to hold private beliefs. It includes the right to perform essential religious obligations and to transmit faith, identity and tradition to one's children. A child's interests include health and safety, but also **family, identity, religion and culture**.

The EJA calls for a **constructive Belgian framework** based on legal clarity, recognition of trained mohalim, medical safeguards, proportionate oversight and dialogue. The way Belgium approaches this issue will send a message far beyond the Jewish community. It will show whether minority religious practices are protected as part of democratic pluralism, or tolerated only until they become politically uncomfortable.

The EJA therefore urges Belgium to adopt a balanced solution: protect children, uphold medical standards, respect parents, recognise trained religious practitioners and ensure that Jewish and Muslim communities can continue to live fully and freely in Belgium.