

NEWS

## Group protests male circumcision in Grand Forks

Protesters in white suits and blood-like stains on their groin areas aimed to deter parents from circumcising male infants, drawing both support and criticism from passersby Sunday at a busy intersection in Grand Forks.

Written By: April Baumgarten | 1:18 pm, Aug. 6, 2017



Brett Johnson holds up signs Sunday in Grand Forks as he protests male circumcision. He and others believe the practice is "genital mutilation." (April Baumgarten/Grand Forks Herald)

Protesters in white suits and blood-like stains on their groin areas aimed to deter parents from circumcising male infants, drawing both support and criticism from passersby Sunday at a busy intersection in Grand Forks.

Four members of the Bloodstained Men and Their Friends held up signs and chanted at 32nd Avenue South and South Columbia Road in opposition of male circumcision. Jewish and Islamic families have the operation performed on babies for religious reasons, though the practice is more popular in the U.S. than in other countries around the world, and medical experts say the benefits outweigh the

risks.

But opponents like Brother K of Sacramento, Calif., questioned those claims, saying male circumcision is "genital mutilation."

"The United States has a federal law that prohibits female circumcision (female genital mutilation)," said K, who legally changed his name to take up the fight against male circumcision. "That law does not give people who commit that crime any excuse. ... We believe that law should apply, and will apply someday to baby boys, also."

The group is on a 17-day tour of cities in the Midwest and has made stops in Minneapolis, Dickinson, Bismarck and Minot. It plans to protest Monday in Fargo.

The group was approached by a Grand Forks police officer whom, K said, told them they were welcomed to protest at the intersection.

The protesters have met mixed reactions in Grand Forks, some honking their horns in support while others shouted obscenities at them. One unidentified man in a car told them to "go home."

"We get both positive and negative reactions," protester Brett Johnson of Kansas City, Kan., said. "People feel strongly about the subject."



Members of the Bloodstained Men and Their Friends protest against male circumcision Sunday in Grand Forks. (April Baumgarten/Grand Forks Herald)