

## Topic #2: Means to eradicate femicide

### I. Introduction

Femicide is a global phenomenon that reflects deep-rooted gender inequalities and the most brutal and extreme manifestation of violence against women and girls. The latest UN reports show that the femicide crisis is rising around the world. While there has been growing public awareness against these killings, much more needs to be done to prevent such violence against women and find a global definition for femicide, so that every woman killed because of her gender is recognized as a victim of this terrible crime, and countries can better tailor efforts to prevent it completely.

### II. Definition of Key Terms

**Femicide:** Femicide (or feminicide, as it is referred to in some contexts) is defined as an intentional killing of women with a gender-related motivation. There can be further specification of different types of femicide depending on the context of the killing, such as 'marital femicide', 'teenage femicide', 'serial femicide', 'mass femicide', 'honour killings', 'killings of female sex workers', etc.

**Gender-related motivation:** Major debates about femicide revolve around the issues of intentionality in gender specific situations and/or gender specific motivations for the killing of women. Gender-motivated behaviour is grounded in gendered culture, that is, in the general inequality of women and men, and in roles that patriarchy has dedicated to men and women. Men and women follow these cultural references; women are constructed in patriarchy as being the property of men, and men are allowed to exercise power and control over women. Gender-motivated killings are located in a society where gendered behaviour is practiced, and in the situation in which the killing took place, for example, the gendered structure of the intimate partnership, abortion, or female genital mutilation.

**Risk factors for femicide:** There are certain risk factors for domestic or partner violence that increase the likelihood of female homicide. These might include: the abuser being older than the woman (with a large age gap), cohabitating (rather than married), estrangement of partners, a child in the home who is not the biological child of the abuser, mental illness, alcohol and drug use, prior criminal involvement of the perpetrator and the presence of firearms in the home, abuser unemployment, stalking behaviour by the abuser, the victim leaving the abuser after living together and the abuser being violent outside the home.

Furthermore, there are also groups of women and girls more likely to face greater risk, such as women in the public eye, including those in politics, women human rights defenders, female journalists, transgender women, indigenous women, etc.

### **III. Background Information**

Femicide is a global crisis that affects women and girls in every country. According to the new report, in 2023, Africa recorded the largest number of female intimate partner and family-related killings, followed by the Americas and Oceania.

Still, too many victims of femicide go uncounted because of the lack of information to identify them as gender-related killings because of national variation in criminal justice recording and investigation practices.

Women and girls are most likely to be killed by those closest to them. In 2023, around 51,100 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members. Between those, current and former intimate partners were by far the most likely perpetrators of femicide. In many cases, only gender-related killings perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member are counted as femicides, however, gender-related killings take place in many contexts beyond the private sphere too. They can be related to rape or sexual violence by someone unknown to the victim and so on.

### **IV. Past UN Actions**

- [Global norms and standards: Ending violence against women](#)
- [UN approves new statistical framework to measure and characterize femicide for more effective prevention measures](#)
- [Latin American Model Protocol for the investigation of gender-related killings of women \(femicide/feminicide\)](#)
- [UN Women Highlights 2023–2024](#)

### **V. Possible Solutions**

With the last UN report Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director, emphasised the need for “robust legislation, improved data collection, greater government accountability, a zero-tolerance culture, and increased funding for women’s rights organizations and institutional bodies.”

“The new femicide report highlights the urgent need for strong criminal justice systems that hold perpetrators accountable, while ensuring adequate support for survivors, including access to safe and transparent reporting mechanisms,” added Ghada Waly, Executive Director of UNODC.

In summary, the most effective actions include: supporting initiatives that focus on primary prevention, changing social norms, and engaging whole communities to create zero tolerance for violence against women - these often are various women's rights organizations, setting strong laws and policies aimed at preventing gender-based violence, strict firearms controls, and the fostering of space for women’s rights and community

groups to share knowledge and shape policy, and lastly making further effort in collecting accurate and transparent data which is essential to inform policy, track progress, and ensure governments remain accountable for their commitments to gender equality.

## **VI. Questions to consider**

1. What is the rate of femicide in your country, and how has it changed over the past decade?
2. Does your country have any specific laws addressing femicide or related issues, such as domestic violence?
3. What is the conviction rate for femicide cases in your country?
4. How does societal stigma or cultural norms in your country influence the reporting and prosecution of femicide?
5. What are some of your country's campaigns, programs, or initiatives aimed at preventing gender-based violence and/or protection of its victims?
6. To what extent does your country participate in the UN actions to address femicide?

## **VII. Sources and useful links**

[Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner/family member femicides | Publications | UN Women](#)

[Five essential facts to know about femicide | UN Women](#)

[One woman killed every 10 minutes: The harrowing global reality of femicide | UN News](#)

[Defining and identifying femicide: a literature review | European Institute for Gender Equality](#)

[How funding women's organizations prevents violence against women / UN Women](#)