

Forum: HRC 2

Issue: Measures to eradicate domestic violence [femicide]

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Introduction

Certain groups of women around the globe enjoy the safety provided by their secure and lawful governments. In accordance with the World Population Review's 2025 global survey, Singapore was placed among the lowest and safest countries for women.¹ In 2021, Singapore's femicide rate was 0.1 per 100,000 females¹, while in contrast to the magnitude of femicide rates in nations of parts of Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Paraguay and Jamaica, the numbers presented are alarming. For instance, the magnitude of femicide rates in Jamaica ranges from 9 to 19 per 100,000 women¹. Evidently, Singapore was an extreme outlier for safety for the female population. Meanwhile, much of Europe, East Asia, and Oceania present consistent low rates of femicide.

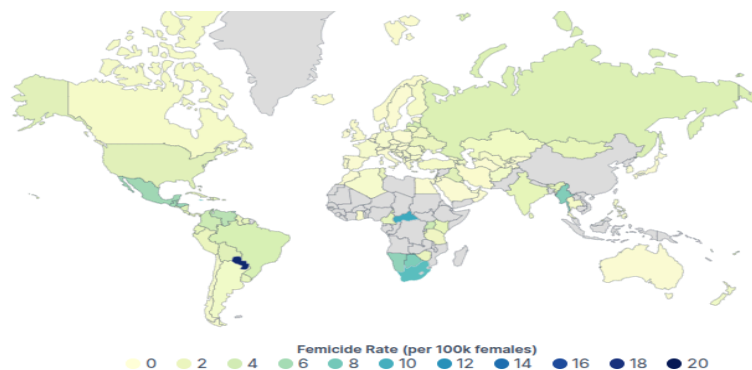


Figure 1. Global Femicide Rates (per 100,000 females)¹

The Africa Data Hub has reported that in Kenya, the common methods of femicides are rather violent. For instance, stabbing is the most common form², which includes the frequent use of sharp weapons within intimate partner and domestic contexts. Other than that, hacking includes the usage of machetes or heavy blades, which truly presents the cultural availability of such lethal tools that could inflict great violence². Another prevalent method would be strangulation, in which the controlling behaviour of a female's intimate partner promotes non-fatal attempts of strangulation to inflict fear in the female, which then escalates into lethal violence². Besides these methods, certain gruesome methods have also been raised awareness on, which include burning, beheading, and the use of firearms². All

these ways of killing are simply alarmingly frequent and cause severe physical suffering and psychological terror to the females who are directly impacted².

Definition of Key Terms

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a form of abuse that can happen to anyone, regardless of their gender, age, sexuality, or socio-economic status³. However, statistically, individuals of the female gender are much more likely to be affected by domestic violence, which could be in various forms such as physical violence, coercive control, psychological abuse, or sexual violence³. These actions often result in individuals experiencing a sense of fear and powerlessness, which worsens over time³.

Femicide

Femicide refers specifically to the killing of women simply because of their sex⁴. Other than domestic violence, such acts of femicide can also be driven by extremist cultural beliefs such as honor killings, dowry-related deaths, and gender-motivated murders⁴. Such horrifying acts often strip women and girls of their basic human rights to remain alive, experience gender equality, and have a peaceful life⁴.

Gender Inequality

Gender Inequality is the unequal distribution of resources, treatment, and opportunities that people receive primarily due to their gender⁵. This inequality is often noticed to be affecting women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals, who are undoubtedly disadvantaged compared to men and boys⁵. Gender inequality is a phenomenon that significantly affects a nation's social, economic, and legal systems, and is at times driven even more aggressively due to cultural norms, gender stereotypes and biases⁵.

Honour Killings

Honour killing is essentially the murder, typically of females, committed by family members who believe that the victim has brought shame or dishonour to the family or a specific community⁴.

Background Information

In recent times, according to UN Women, a United Nations entity, 2022 was recorded as the highest annual magnitude of femicide-driven killings of females in all parts of the world⁶. Ever since, such numbers only seem to increase. In 2023, it was also reported that every 10 minutes, a woman's life was taken away by her very own partner and family members⁶. For a total estimate, around 51,100 females were killed, which means that on average, 140 females were killed every single day by their own family members, the individuals that they are closest to⁶. Such acts of femicide are often driven by

ideologies such as gender inequality, failure of protection systems across the world, and normalisation of violence⁶.

Gender inequality has always been a crucial reason behind femicides due to cultural and social Norms, in which females are stereotyped into a specific role in a household. For instance, in various cultures, women are expected to fulfil caregiving roles which include, but are not limited to, childcare, nursing, and teaching⁵. On the other hand, men are expected to pursue occupations that involve leadership, politics, law enforcement, and the military⁵. This occupational difference results in a power imbalance between the two genders, in which patriarchal beliefs and unequal power relations cause men to exert dominance over women⁵. “Honour killings” would be an excellent case in point. In certain regions of the world, women are expected to fulfill ideas of purity and obedience⁴. However, at times, when women are unable to satisfy the requirements, they are viewed as a “dishonour” by their families and often lose their lives at the hands of their relatives⁴.

Furthermore, certain cultures also promote female genital mutilation, sex selection, and dowry deaths, which have surprisingly been rooted in gendered norms⁴. Therefore, it is evident how cultural norms create the backdrop for violence, where women are punished if they step outside rigid expectations⁴. Such femicide acts, driven by such gender inequality, drive the patterns of femicide worldwide⁵.

Another major reason driving femicide would be the Failure of Protection Systems for women across the world. It is evident how certain governments are unable to practice effective policing, enforce restraining orders, and provide support services for affected women⁷. In Brazil, a law has been implemented named “The Maria da Penha Law,” which includes emergency intervention orders and removal of the aggressors from homes⁷. However, the judiciary’s lack of integrity results in them closing cases under threat, allowing the aggressor to remain indifferent and unaccountable before femicide occurs⁷. Emergency intervention orders are also highly ineffective, as monitoring patrols and electronic alarms provide little assistance due to their inconsistent implementation⁷. Therefore, women remain highly vulnerable to the threats of lethal domestic violence, which often spirals into a tunnel leading to femicide⁷. As these numbers continue to gradually increase and create fear amongst individuals all around the world, the underlying truth is that the true scale of femicide is much higher than what has been presented.

All in all, it is evident how societies and relationships that incorporate rigid distinctions between masculine and feminine roles often result in higher rates of violence⁵. Such gender inequality and stereotyped gender roles are then associated with poverty, racism, and various other challenges that simply increase the risks for women globally⁵. Steps to be taken to alleviate these issues are greatly essential as they affect women worldwide, shape attitudes of individuals, institutions, and relationships, which then carry on to condone abuse and injustice for our women⁵.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Paraguay

Paraguay experiences an appalling femicide epidemic with a rate of 19.0/100,000 among women¹, ranking among the highest globally. Between 2019 and 2022, violent deaths of women were driven by gender-based violence against 143 women, with an average of one femicide per 10 days¹. The majority of the victims were young adult women aged between 18 and 44 years, and 94% of the perpetrators were known to the victims, primarily being partners or former partners¹. The government of Paraguay only considered femicide to be an independent crime through its statutebook in the year 2016, thus facilitating better tracking through the Women's Observatory¹. However, impunity is rife with poor enforcement and ingrained patriarchal attitudes, thus sustaining a practice of violence against women across the regions of the nation, including its capital and 16 departments¹.

The Central African Republic

The Central African Republic records a femicide rate of 10.6 per 100,000 female citizens¹ and is significantly affected by social instability, ongoing war, and fragile state institutions¹. Here, legal protection of female citizens is poor, and gender discrimination, violent crime against females is fraught with general impunity¹. The lack of proper policing and judicial capacity allows femicide to increase, commingling with ongoing civil rebellion and social anarchy that is characteristic of war zones.

Jamaica

The rate of femicide of Jamaica is 9.3 per 100,000 females¹ and is correlated with significant domestic and gang violence. Economic reverses and ingrained gender stereotyping position violent power structures within households and communities¹. Gender violence is not consistently checked by poor law enforcement and by tolerance of male dominance by the broader societal community particularly within gang-affected neighborhoods of disadvantage.

Honduras

Honduras is home to a femicide rate of 6.5 per 100,000 female population¹ and ranks among the highest worldwide. Organized crime, pervasive corruption, and weak institutions greatly impair protection efforts¹. Gender schemas that justify male dominance and violence and scarce access to victim services expose females to deadly assault, mostly by intimate partners or crime groups.

Mexico

Mexico, with a femicide rate of 6.2 per 100,000 women¹, struggles with many unresolved cases. Impunity, corrupt justice systems, and involvement by organized crime keep a tense atmosphere against the protection of women¹. Laws against femicide do exist but lack consistent enforcement to add to the skepticism by victims against formal protection mechanisms.

United Nations

International organizations like the United Nations, WHO, and UN Women proactively fight femicide by promoting legal reformation, international monitoring, and victim service efforts⁵. The organizations control data collection to better understand the scope and nature of femicide, strive to attain gender equality, and aid international policy upgrades⁵. National reforms that were influenced

include Mexico's new federal legislation and Honduras' Cure Violence Model that engages citizens to help abate violent activity and provide intervention.

Viable Solutions

Community mobilisation is a crucial intervention to prevent and reduce cases of gender-based violence and femicide⁷. A leading solution is to scale up grass-root mediation networks, such as those utilized in Honduras, to provide direct services to vulnerable women⁷. Community mediators, trained and assisted by local leaders, can recognize potential early indicators of violence and intervene before abuse takes place⁸. Relocation services, through which vulnerable women, quietly and safely, are moved to safer living conditions, should be institutionalised and financed sustainably too⁷. Community-based advocacy programs that challenge negative gender norms through the utilization of theatre, radio, social media, and programs among the youth can reverse culture on the grass root and bring about generational change⁷.

Another sustainable community intervention is taking on violence interruption strategies, whereby community volunteers, frequently themselves survivors, act as initial responders to diffusing domestic conflicts or violent situations⁷. Such interventions offer immediate safety while developing communal accountability⁷. By inserting safety structures within communities themselves, neighborhoods gain increased control over stopping violence and safeguarding women⁷. Blending such practice with social businesses that employ survivors can further disrupt patterns of dependency and facilitate empowerment of women⁷.

At a governmental level, one of the key solutions is to strengthen and execute laws against gender violence⁷. Governments need to make sure that safeguarding laws not only exist on paper but also in practice⁷. This entails to-the-point, specialized training of law enforcement officials to effectively and sensitively deal with cases of domestic violence and femicide⁷. Governments should also set up centralized databases that monitor reported cases, breaches of protective order, and conviction rates and thus identify system gaps and facilitate evidence-based policy decision-making⁷. Transparency through data ensures accountability and fuels trust in justice systems⁷. Equally significant is the expansion of victim-centered services through state support⁷. Countries can build a national network of shelters, 24/7 hotlines, and legal aid clinics that prioritize survivor safety and dignity⁷. To ensure accessibility, these services should be located across both urban and rural areas, supported with government subsidies for transportation and childcare. Moreover, governments should partner with private companies to fund mobile applications that provide quick, discreet help-seeking pathways for women in abusive situations⁷.

Government policies should equally focus on long-term cultural transformation by investing in

education reform that instills gender equity among the young⁵. Revisions of curriculum can combine lessons about consent, respect, and healthy relationships, while media efforts can challenge abusive stereotypes⁵. To shatter structural dependency that frequently confines women to repeated patterns of violence, governments can scale up economic empowerment initiatives like micro-loans, vocational training, and scholarships to girls and women. By doing this, the plan gives financial freedom to survivors and bolsters their resilience⁵, while constructing a world that perceives girls and women as equal actors in political, economic, and social arenas.

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