

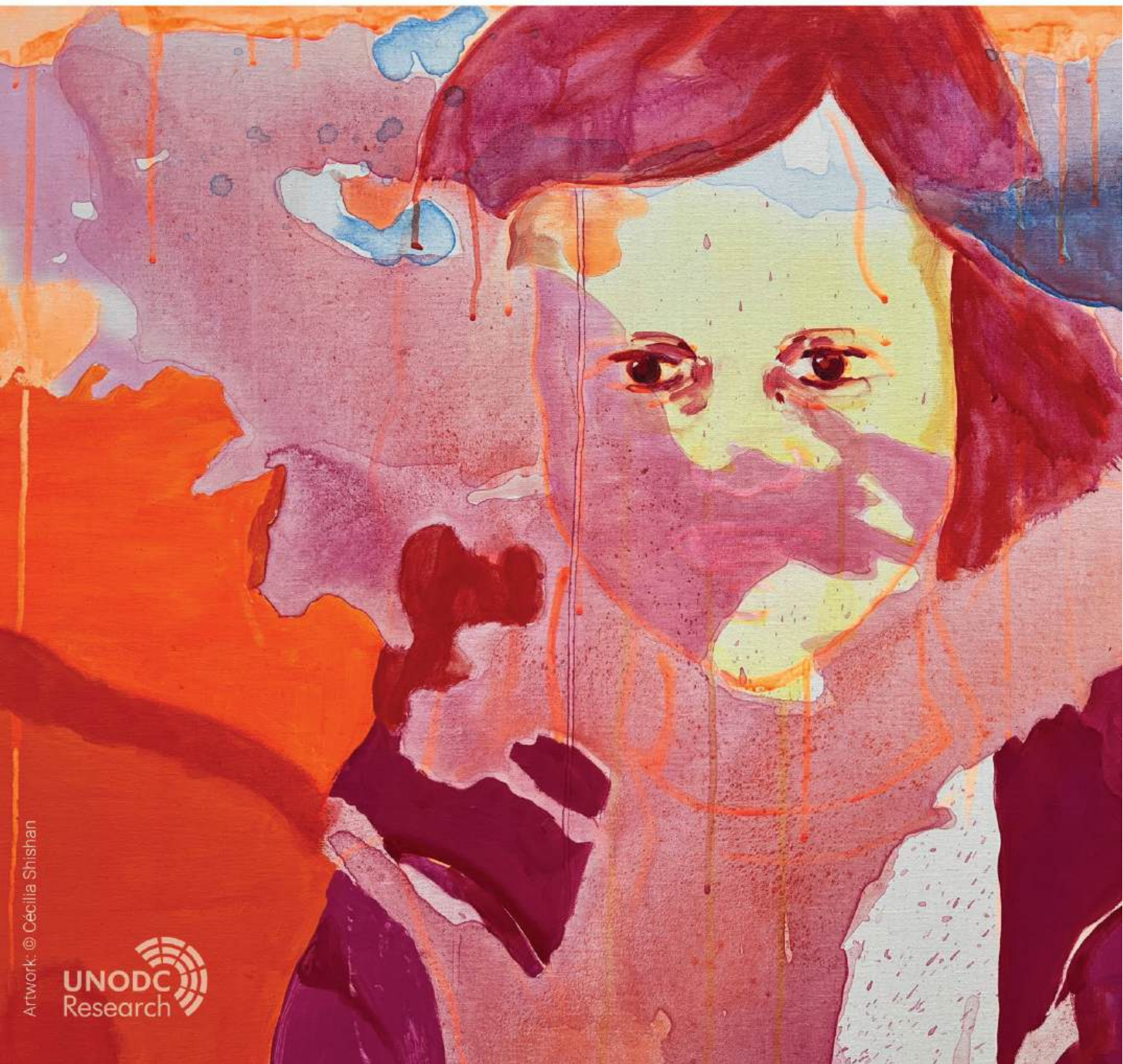


United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime



FEMICIDES IN 2023

Global estimates of intimate partner/family member femicides



Artwork: © Cécilia Shishan



* In this publication, the term “femicide” is used to refer to all types of gender-related killings of women and girls as described in the “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide””, developed by UNODC and UN Women and approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022.

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PREFACE

The research brief this year marks a pivotal anniversary – 25 years since the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/134, which established 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This day commemorates the brutal assassination of the Mirabal sisters in the Dominican Republic on 25 November 1960, whose activism and sacrifice galvanized global attention towards efforts to end violence inflicted upon women and girls due to their gender.

More than two decades later, and despite the efforts of women's rights movements to demand justice and accountability, as well as some notable progress in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, significant challenges persist in fully addressing the issue. We are alarmed that the number of killings by family members and intimate partners – the most common manifestation of femicide – remains at staggering levels globally. Some 51,100 women and girls were killed at home by people closely related to them in 2023, accounting for 60 per cent of all female homicides. In too many cases, victims of femicide had previously reported violence and their killings could have been prevented.

This research brief also reveals a highly worrying trend indicating that attention to the problem of femicide may have waned in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020, the number of countries reporting or publishing data on the killing of women by intimate partners or other family members has decreased by 50 per cent. Yet, more and better data are needed for a deeper understanding of the issue and its magnitude, and in order to develop and implement more effective prevention and response strategies. The UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings provides detailed guidance for producing comprehensive data on femicide.

With the clock ticking towards 2030, the target date for the Sustainable Development Goals, and as the global community approaches the 30th anniversary review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we urgently need to accelerate progress towards gender equality and eradicating violence against women and girls. The time has come to request more accountability, more funding, and a renewed dedication to safeguarding and advancing the rights of all women and girls, in every place and in all their diversity. UN Women and UNODC remain committed to supporting Member States to end violence against women and girls and achieving justice for every victim. Impunity must end and perpetrators must be held accountable.

Ghada Waly, Executive Director,
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KEY FINDINGS

- Globally, approximately 51,100 women and girls were killed by their intimate partners or other family members during 2023. Higher than the 2022 estimate of 48,800 victims,¹ this change is not indicative of an actual increase as it is largely due to differences in data availability at the country level.² The 2023 figure means that 60 per cent of the almost 85,000 women and girls killed intentionally during the year were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members. In other words, an average of 140 women and girls worldwide lost their lives every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative.
- Women and girls everywhere continue to be affected by this extreme form of gender-based violence and no region is excluded. With an estimated 21,700 victims of intimate partner/family member femicide in 2023, Africa is the region with the highest number of victims in aggregate terms. Moreover, Africa continues to account for the highest number of victims of intimate partner/family member femicide relative to the size of its population (2.9 victims per 100,000 in 2023). The Americas and Oceania also recorded high rates of intimate partner/family member femicide in 2023, at 1.6 and 1.5 per 100,000 respectively, while the rates were significantly lower in Asia and Europe, at 0.8 and 0.6 per 100,000 respectively.
- Beyond the killing of women and girls by intimate partners or other family members, other forms of femicide exist. In recent years, some countries have begun to quantify other forms of femicide by implementing the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings. In France, for example, during the period 2019–2022, 79 per cent of all female homicides were committed by intimate partners or other family members, while other forms of femicide accounted for an additional 5 per cent of all female homicides. Similarly, exploratory research in South Africa indicates that femicides outside the domestic sphere accounted for 9 per cent of total female homicides in 2020–2021.
- Due to a lack of sufficient data in other regions, time trends in intimate partner/family member femicide can only be monitored in the Americas and Europe at present. In the former, the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide has remained relatively stable since 2010, while it decreased slowly in Europe (-20 per cent) between 2010 and 2023, as a result of slowly declining trends in countries in Northern, Eastern and Southern Europe.
- The intentional killing of women in the private sphere in Europe and in the Americas is largely committed by intimate partners. Out of all women killed by intimate partners or other family members in those two regions in 2023, 64 per cent were murdered by their intimate partners in Europe and 58 per cent in the Americas. In the rest of the world (based on available data), however, women and girls are more likely to be killed by family members (59 per cent) than by their intimate partners (41 per cent). This emphasizes the need to ensure that the prevention of domestic violence addresses intimate relationships as well as family contexts where women are at higher risk.
- Available data for three countries – France (2019–2022), South Africa (2020–2021) and Colombia (2014–2017) – confirm that a significant share of women killed by their intimate partners (between 22 and 37 per cent) had previously reported some form of physical, sexual or psychological violence by their partner. This suggests that many killings of women are preventable. Restraining orders on male partners that prohibit further contact between them and the victims of their violence are among the measures that could prevent the killing of women.
- Over the past two decades, the number of countries reporting data on the killing of women and girls by intimate partners or other family members increased slowly. The number peaked in 2020 at 75 countries, but subsequently decreased and by 2023 was half the number in 2020. Furthermore, at present only a few countries are able to produce data on forms of femicide committed outside the domestic sphere in compliance with the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings. Member States have increasingly adopted measures to address femicide in recent years, but the accountability of countries' efforts to fight gender-related killings is also measured by the quality and availability of their statistics on femicide. Significant efforts to reverse the negative trend in terms of data availability would thus increase government accountability for addressing violence against women.

¹ UNODC and UN Women, "Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)" (United Nations publication, 2023).

² For more information, see the methodological annex to the present research brief.

Total number of women killed in 2023
by intimate partners or other
family members

51,100

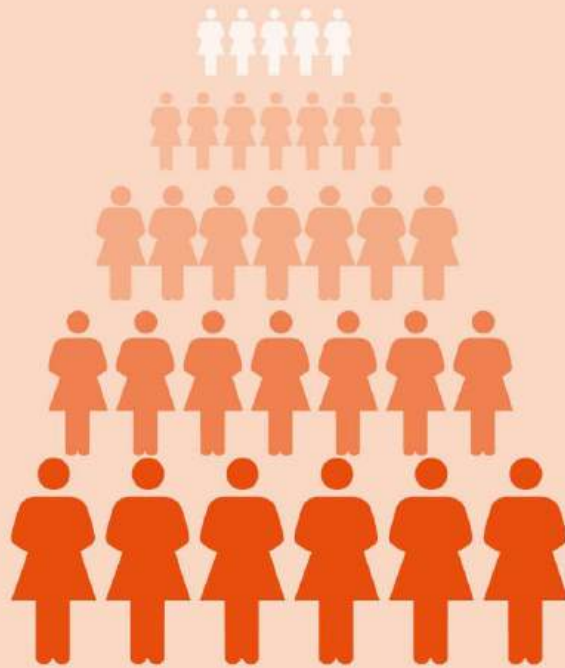
Worldwide



On average, 140 women and girls were killed every day in 2023 by someone in their own family



140



women and girls are killed by someone in their own family

Regional estimates

Women and girls in all regions are affected by gender-related killings. In 2023, Africa was the region with the largest absolute number of killings and with the highest level of violence relative to the size of its female population.

Total intimate partner/family member femicides
2023



Rates of intimate partner/family member femicide per 100,000 female population
2023



Gender dimension of homicide

While the vast majority of male homicides occur outside the domestic sphere, the home is the most dangerous place for women and girls.

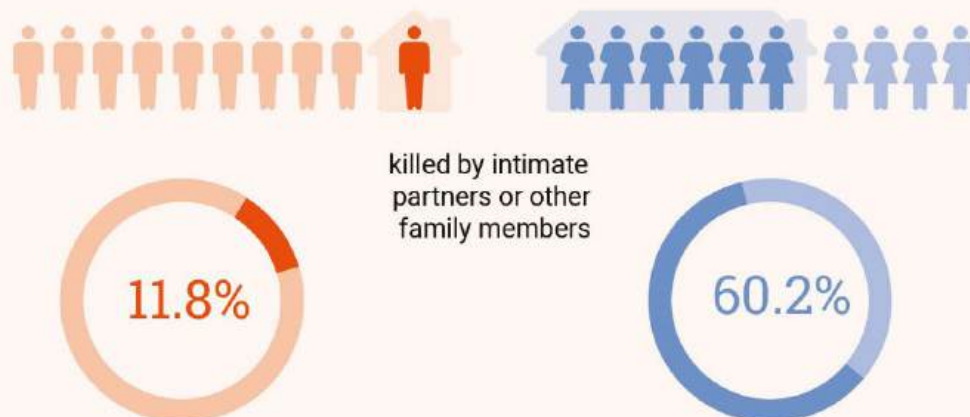
Male and female share of homicide victims

2023



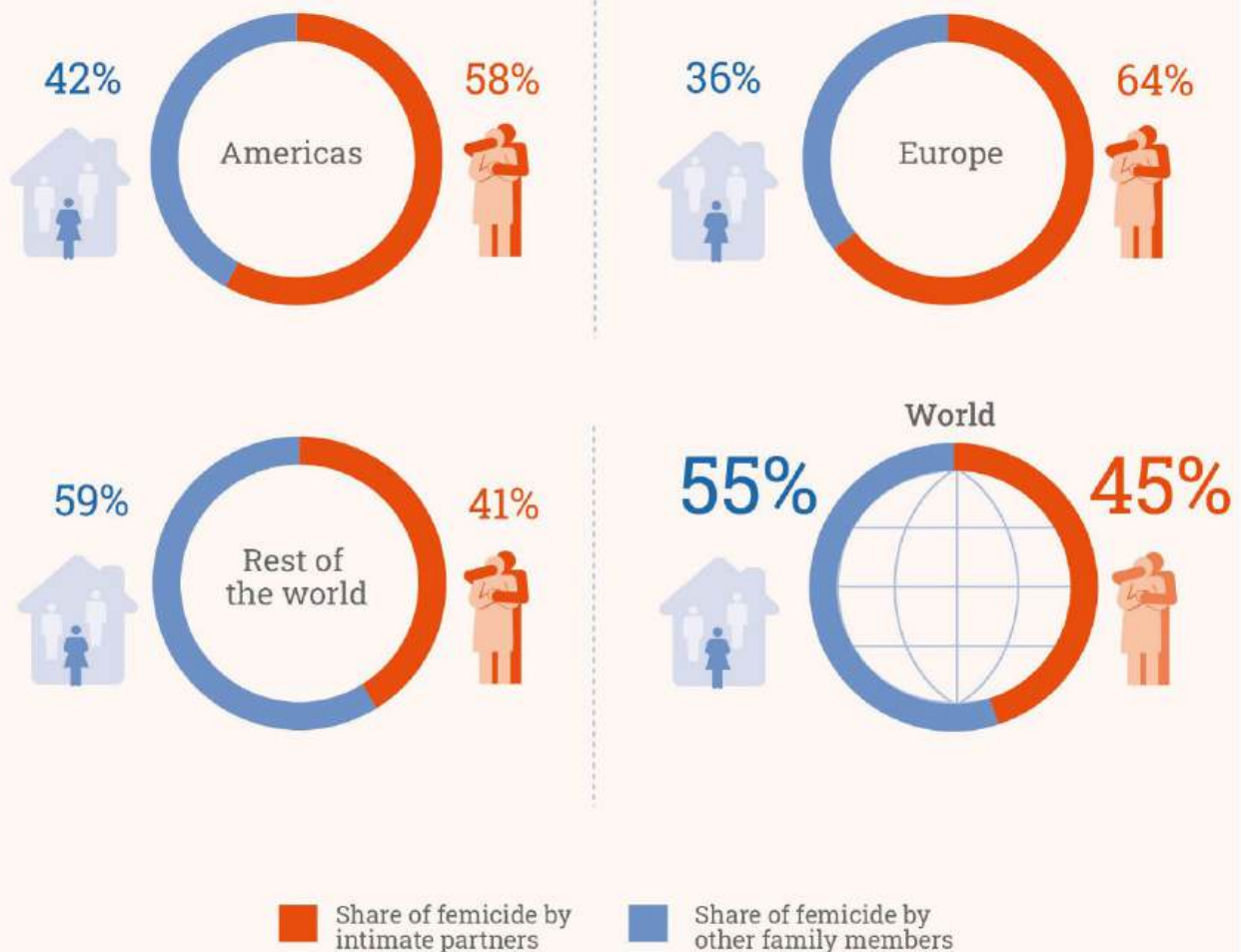
Share of male and female homicide victims killed by intimate partners or other family members

2023



Perpetrators of femicide within the family

The shares of femicides committed by intimate partners or other family members within the domestic sphere vary across the different regions of the world.

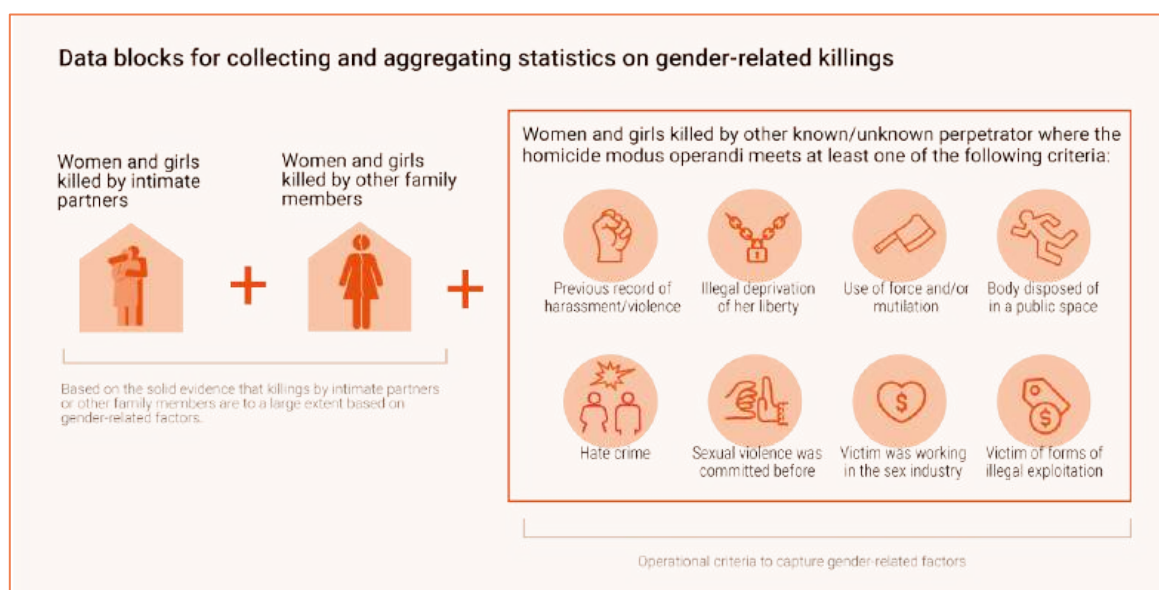


INTRODUCTION

Femicide represents the most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence against women and girls. Very often such killings are not isolated incidents but rather the culmination of pre-existing forms of gender-based violence that affect all regions and countries worldwide. Broadly speaking, femicides or gender-related killings of women and girls³ are committed in different settings, within the private sphere and beyond, for gender-related motives. Such motives are rooted in societal norms and stereotypes that consider women to be subordinate to men, as well as in discrimination towards women and girls, inequality and unequal power relations between women and men in society.⁴ Gender-related motives characterize the context in which these crimes are committed, which also distinguishes them from other intentional killings of women and girls unrelated to gender motives.

The Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”), jointly developed by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women and approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022, identifies three types of femicide:

1. Intentional homicides of women and girls perpetrated by intimate partners
2. Intentional homicides of women and girls perpetrated by other family members
3. Intentional homicides of women and girls committed by perpetrators other than intimate partners or other family members and where the killing meets at least one of eight criteria identified in the Statistical framework



This research brief is focused on patterns of and trends in the first two types of femicide as the availability of data on the third type of femicide is still very limited. The focus is therefore on femicides committed within the domestic sphere, which are by far the most prevalent form of gender-related killings of women and girls.

Global and regional estimates of the number of women killed by intimate partners or other family members in 2023 are presented in this research brief, as are available time trends, other features of gender-related killings, selected practices for preventing femicides and available country data.

³ The terms “femicide” and “gender-related killings of women and girls” are used interchangeably in this research brief.

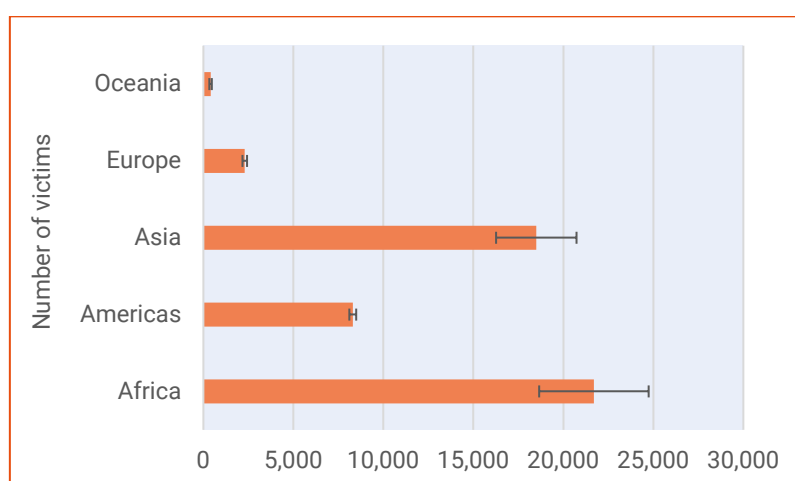
⁴ UNODC and UN Women, “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)” (United Nations publication, 2021).

INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY MEMBER FEMICIDE IN 2023

Approximately 51,100 (45,400–56,700) women and girls worldwide lost their lives at the hands of an intimate partner or other family member in 2023. Higher than the 2022 estimate of 48,800 victims,⁵ this change is not indicative of an actual increase as it is largely due to differences in data availability at the country level.⁶ The 2023 figure means that 60 per cent of the roughly 85,000 women and girls killed intentionally that year were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members, such as fathers, uncles, mothers and brothers.

The highest number of victims of intimate partner/family member femicide was recorded in Africa in 2023 with 21,700 (18,600–24,600) victims, followed by Asia with 18,500 (16,200–20,700), the Americas with 8,300 (8,100–8,500), Europe with 2,300 (2,100–2,400) and Oceania with 300 (282–420) victims. Africa continues to record the highest number of victims in aggregate terms, although it is advisable to interpret the regional estimates with caution, as they are subject to significant uncertainty given persistent limitations in terms of data availability.

Figure 1: Estimated number of victims of intimate partner/family member femicide, by region (2023)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide Dataset.

Note: Uncertainty bands represent possible estimation errors due to the imputation of missing values at the country level. The bands do not represent probability confidence intervals. The estimates are based on the latest available data, which remain limited, especially in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The size of the error bars provides an indication of the level of uncertainty that the estimates carry at the regional level.

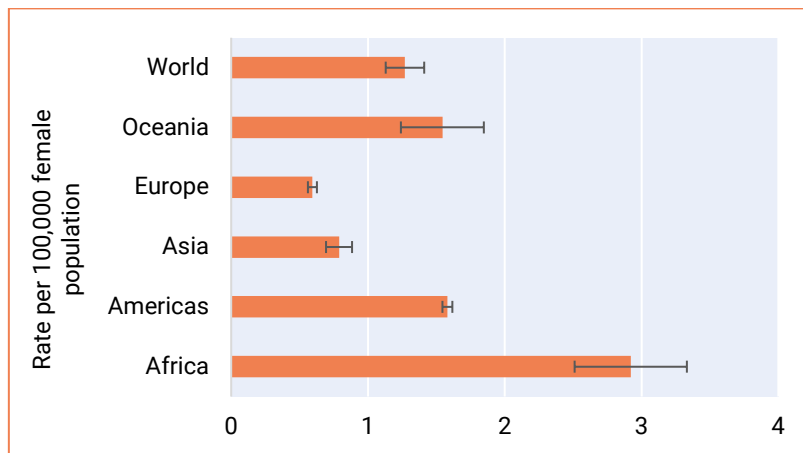
Disparities across regions in the total number of female victims of intimate partner/family member femicide in absolute terms also reflect differences in population size. It is therefore important to assess the scale of the problem through a different lens and to analyse the extent of the problem by looking at the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide.

Globally, around 1.3 women per 100,000 female population are estimated to have been killed by an intimate partner or another family member in 2023. In terms of regional differences, it is estimated that the highest rate of intimate-partner/family member femicide was in Africa (2.9 per 100,000 female population), followed by the Americas (1.6), Oceania (1.5), Asia (0.8) and Europe (0.6). As shown below, however, regional rates may mask significant subregional and national disparities in terms of the level of lethal victimization.

⁵ UNODC and UN Women, "Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)" (United Nations publication, 2023).

⁶ For more information, see the methodological annex to the present research brief.

Figure 2: Estimated rate of victims of intimate partner/family member femicide per 100,000 female population, by region (2023)



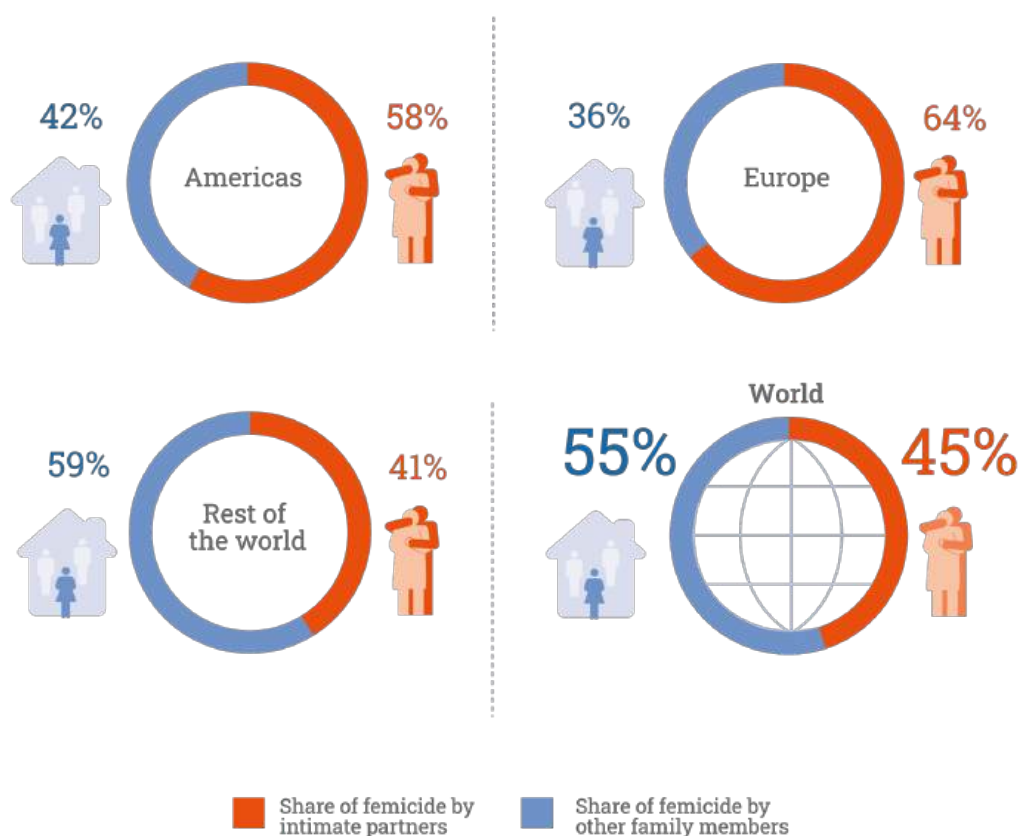
Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide Dataset.

Note: Uncertainty bands represent possible estimation errors due to the imputation of missing values at the country level. The bands do not represent probability confidence intervals. The estimates are based on the latest available data, which remain limited, especially in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The size of the error bars provides an indication of the level of uncertainty that the estimates carry at the regional level.

The vast majority of intentional killings of women and girls worldwide are perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members. This suggests that the home remains the most dangerous place for women and girls in terms of the risk of lethal victimization. On closer inspection of the relationship between victims and perpetrators, estimates based on available data suggest that the largest share of intimate partner/family member killings in Europe and in the Americas are in fact committed by intimate partners, with 64 per cent being murdered by their intimate partners in Europe and 58 per cent in the Americas. In the other three regions – Africa, Asia and Oceania – available data suggest that the majority of female victims of intimate partner/family member femicide were killed by family members (59 per cent) rather than intimate partners (41 per cent).

Given the differences in victim-perpetrator dynamics among these two types of femicide, targeted prevention policies are needed to tackle these specific forms of gender-based violence within the domestic sphere. The context in which intimate partner violence can escalate into a killing has been widely studied by criminologists and academics, with a series of risk factors such as a history of violence between the perpetrator and the victim, previous threats and an actual or pending separation being identified.⁷ Considerably less is known about the patterns and risk factors associated with the intentional killings of women and girls by other family members, which may require a broader set of prevention strategies.

⁷ Johnson, H. et al., "Intimate femicide: The role of coercive control", *Feminist Criminology*, vol. 14 (2017).

Figure 3: Shares of perpetrators of femicide within the family, by region (average 2010–2023)

Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.



BOX 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMICIDES IN FRANCE PERPETRATED BETWEEN 2019 AND 2022

(Contribution by the Criminological Research Division of the National Directorate of the Judicial Police in France)

In France, violence against women has been receiving increased attention in recent years and, although long underestimated, it is now acknowledged to be a national priority. Since 2017, President Macron has made the fight against this type of violence the "great national cause" of his term of office. In 2019, the French Government organised a series of debates and consultations designed to step up the fight against this phenomenon. This political attention has led to stronger systems of prevention, protection and support for victims, but despite this progress, violence against women remains a major challenge for French society.

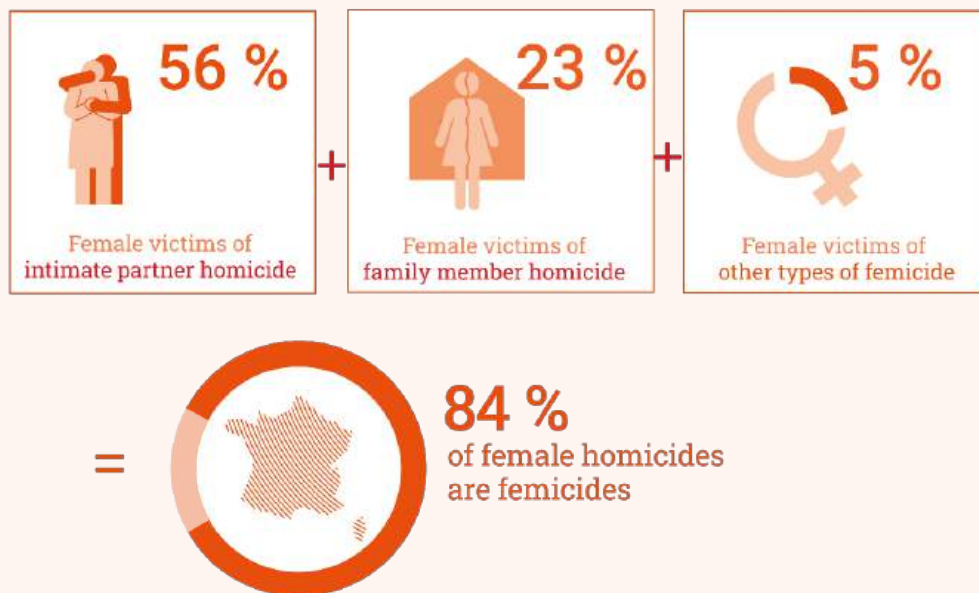
The latest French victimization survey, *Vécu et Ressenti en Matière de Sécurité* (Experiences and perceptions in terms of security), estimates that 240,000 women were victims of physical violence and 217,000 of sexual violence in the country in 2022.⁸ Homicide remains the paroxysmal manifestation of the continuum of violence against women and its continued monitoring helps to improve understanding of trends in violence against women. The National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ)⁹ collects and analyses operational data (criminal files, records of investigations and archives) on all intentional homicides committed in France. In 2024, DNPJ has implemented the Statistical

⁸ Service statistique ministériel de la sécurité intérieure (SSMSI), Survey report, *Vécu et Ressenti en Matière de Sécurité, Victimation, Délinquance et Sentiment d'Insécurité* (2023).

⁹ Within DNPJ, the Criminological Research Division (DRC) is responsible for studying criminal phenomena and developing monitoring tools for field personnel. It collects and processes information collected by DNPJ and disseminates insights gained through criminological analysis.

framework on gender-related killings of women and girls developed by UNODC and UN Women¹⁰ to measure the total number of femicides in France. Constantly updated based on information from law enforcement activities, the preliminary data for the period 2019–2022 are presented here. For this and other reasons, such data may slightly differ from statistical data on intentional homicides released by the statistical service of the Ministry of the Interior.

Shares of femicides among total intentional homicides of women, France (2019–2022)



Source: National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ).

In France, most killings of women have a gender-related motive

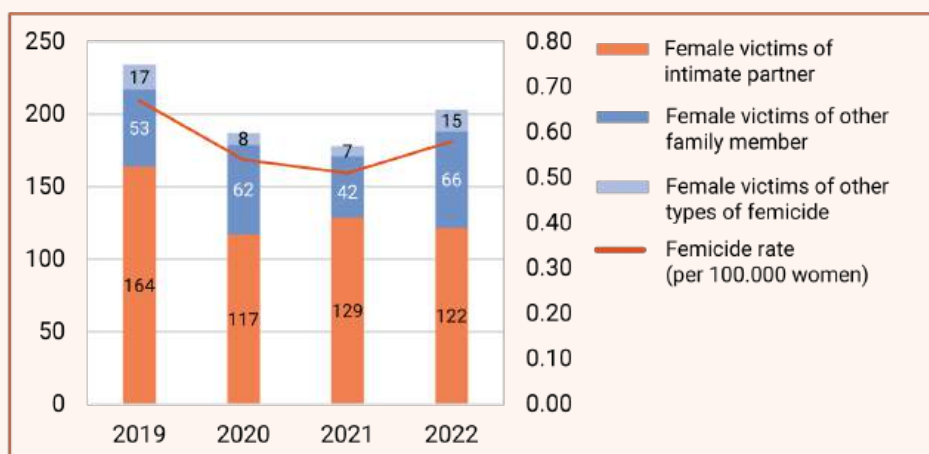
Between 2019 and 2022, 956 women or girls were victims of intentional homicide in France and 84 per cent of the killings were femicides. The majority of these gender-related killings were of women killed by their current or former intimate partner (56 per cent of all women killed), 23 per cent were killed by other family members and a smaller share of women (5 per cent) were killed because of a gender-related motive by perpetrators outside their family. A significant share (14 per cent) of female homicides was perpetrated due to motives unrelated to gender (for example, in connection with a robbery or dispute) and in the case of a small share (2 per cent) of all female homicides there was not sufficient information available to establish their nature.

On average, the femicide rate in France was 0.58 per 100,000 female population in the years 2019 to 2022, during which it ranged between 0.51 (2021) and 0.67 (2019). The femicide rate underwent a decreasing trend until 2021, but then rose again because a greater number of women were killed by other family members.

Some 40 per cent of femicides perpetrated outside the domestic sphere (47 cases during the period under examination) were accompanied by sexual violence, while extreme violence or mutilation of the body was used against the victim in almost one third of cases. In the case of one third of femicides perpetrated outside the family sphere, the victims were in vulnerable situations, such as being employed in the sex industry or subject to illegal exploitation.

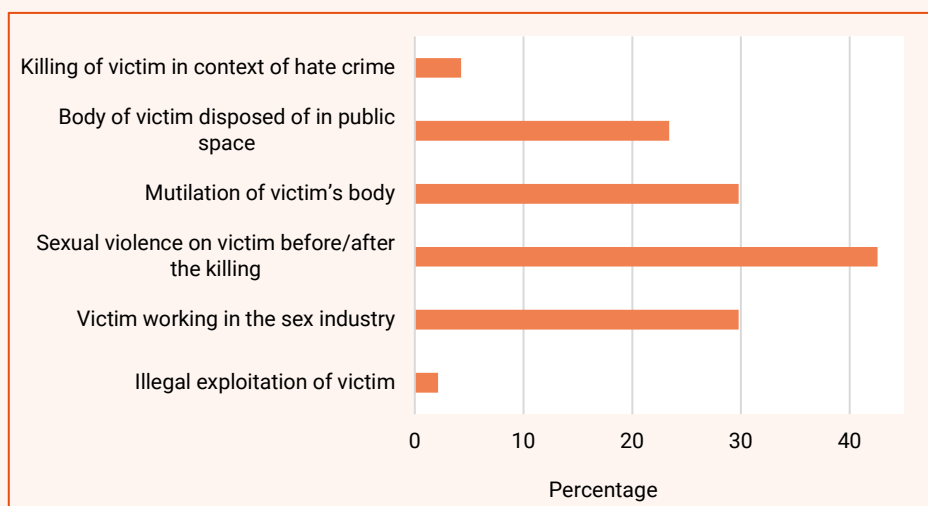
¹⁰ UNDOC and UN Women, "Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as "femicide/feminicide")" (United Nations publication, 2021).

Number of femicides, by type, France (2019–2022)



Source: National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ).

Criteria for identifying femicides not perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, France (2019–2022)



Source: National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ).

Note: The sum of the percentages is higher than 100 as there are femicide cases where multiple criteria are met. For example, a femicide committed after sexual violence could also be accompanied by mutilation of the victim's body.

Context and modus operandi of femicides

It is extremely common for victims of femicide to know the perpetrator, with victims and perpetrators knowing each other in 97 per cent of cases. This finding is also observed in other Western European countries¹¹ and is particularly relevant in informing prevention measures.

Most femicides in France are committed with a weapon: 29 per cent with a bladed weapon and 22 per cent with a firearm, most of which are domestic hunting weapons. Over one third of femicides in France are committed without a weapon (37 per cent). This is not specific to France, as the distribution is the same in several other Western European countries.¹²

¹¹ Liem, M. et al., "Patterns of female homicide victimization in Western Europe", *International Criminology*, vol. 4, No. 2 (Springer, 2024).

¹² Ibid.

In terms of locations where femicides occur, three quarters are committed in the victim's home and 11 per cent in the street or other public places. Often, the victim also knows the perpetrator (84 per cent of cases) when the killing occurs in public spaces.

When considering possible risk factors, it should be noted that fewer victims (11 per cent) and perpetrators (20 per cent) of femicides are under the influence of alcohol than in the case of male homicides (25 and 30 per cent respectively). Some studies point to the drug intoxication of victims as a homicidal risk factor,¹³ but in the case of femicides in France, this does not seem to be the case, with 3 per cent of victims and 5 per cent of perpetrators of femicide being under the influence of drugs at the time of the crime.

Finally, it is of note that perpetrators of femicide are almost always detected by the authorities, as this happens in 97 per cent of cases, a significantly higher share than in the case of homicides of male victims (79 per cent). However, the vast majority of perpetrators of femicide are men, as only 10 per cent of femicides are committed by women.

Focus on femicide perpetrated by intimate partners

When focusing on the most prevalent form of femicide in France, that is the killing of women by their intimate partners, it is clear that such killings can follow a culmination of ongoing domestic violence: 37 per cent of women were killed by their intimate partner after the victim had reported previous sexual, physical or psychological violence by her partner. It is particularly important to monitor such situations as specific preventative measures can be taken by competent authorities. Issuing a restraining order on the male partner with the aim of preventing further contact with the wife/female partner is one such measure. In just 7 per cent of the femicide cases where the victim had been subject to previous forms of violence, the perpetrator had received a restraining order by the authorities. Such a small share may indicate that if appropriate measures had been used more widely, some femicides could have been prevented.¹⁴ Collecting this type of information, as suggested by the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings, can be of great value in monitoring the effectiveness of policy measures that address femicide.

In France, a femicide committed by an intimate partner is often followed by another spell of violence.¹⁵ For example, in 31 per cent of cases the perpetrator takes his own life, while in another 10 per cent suicide is attempted without success. In a significant share of cases such occurrences lead to dramatic consequences for other relatives, such as the children of the couple involved.

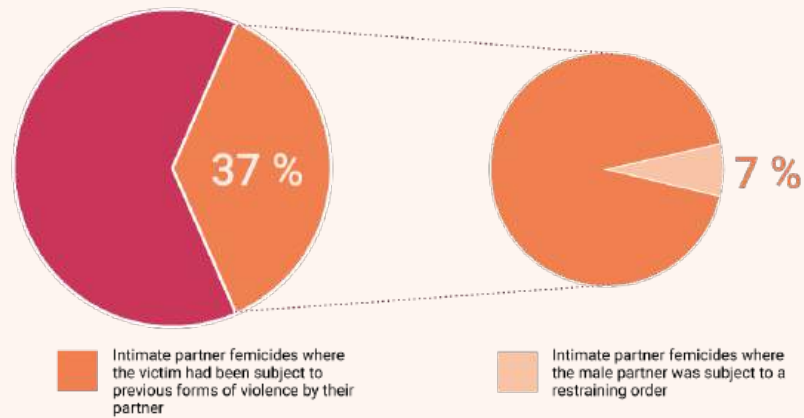
Finally, the age profiles of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner femicide indicate that the risk of falling victim to this type of killing is slightly higher for women in the age group 26–35 and for perpetrators aged 36–45, although women of all ages are at risk.

¹³ Bye, E. K., "Alcohol and homicide in Europe", in Liem, M., Pridemore, W., *Handbook of European Homicide Research. Patterns, Explanations and Country Studies* (Springer, 2012), pp. 231–245.

¹⁴ To be properly evaluated, the number of femicides committed by partners subject to a restraining order should be compared with the total number of partners subject to a restraining order.

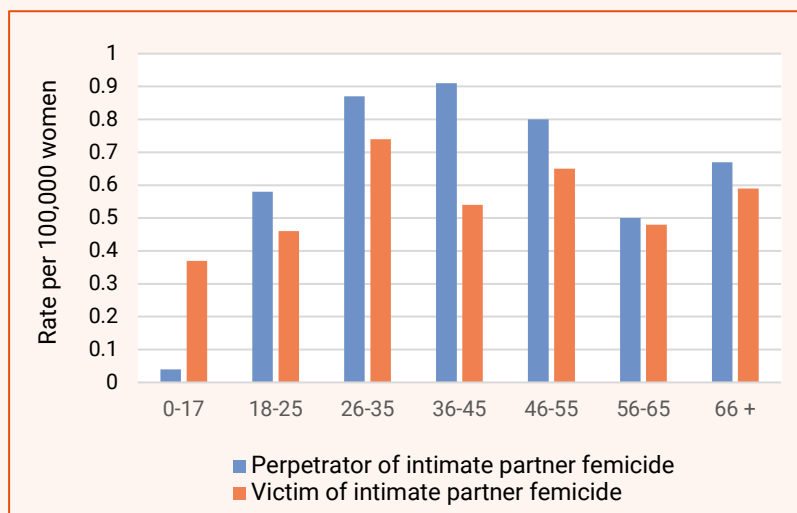
¹⁵ Larchet, K., Langlade, A. and Lacambre, M., "The specifics of homicide-suicide in France", *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, vol. 100 (2023).

Share of intimate partner femicides where the victim had been subject to previous forms of violence and where the male partner was subject to a restraining order, France (2019–2022)



Source: National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ).

Rate of intimate partner femicide, by age of victim (per 100,000 female population) and type of perpetrator (per 100,000 male population), France (2019–2022)



Source: National Directorate of the Judicial Police (DNPJ).

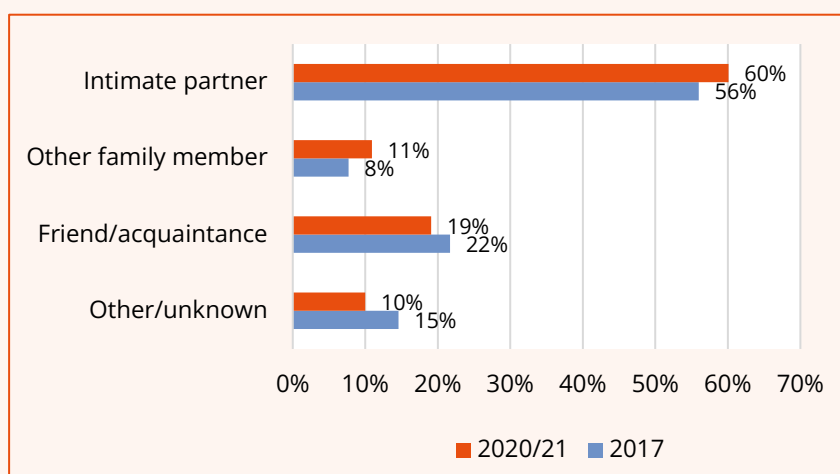
BOX 2: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON FEMICIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Contribution by the South African Medical Research Council)

The Gender & Health Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council has been studying femicide in South Africa for more than 20 years.¹⁶ The research approach is based on random samples of death registrations from medico-legal laboratories (mortuaries) from which the mortuary file and the autopsy report are extracted on murder cases of women and girls aged 14 and above. Furthermore, interviews with police investigators are conducted for each case and available information collected from police files, including on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The last two surveys were conducted in 2017 and 2020/21.

Consistent with what happens in several other countries, the majority of women murdered in South Africa are killed by their intimate partners or other family members. In the two surveys conducted by the South African Medical Research Council, the shares were respectively 64 per cent and 71 per cent. Somewhat interestingly, a significant share of female homicides is committed by other persons known to the victims.

Shares of female homicides, by type of perpetrator, South Africa (2017 and 2020/21)



Source: South African Medical Research Council.

Thanks to information provided by mortuary files and police records collected in the 2020/21 survey, it was estimated that 80 per cent of all murders of women in South Africa in that period were femicides. Beyond intimate partner and family member killings, it was possible to identify other forms of femicide by the modus operandi of the killing or certain characteristics of the victim.¹⁷

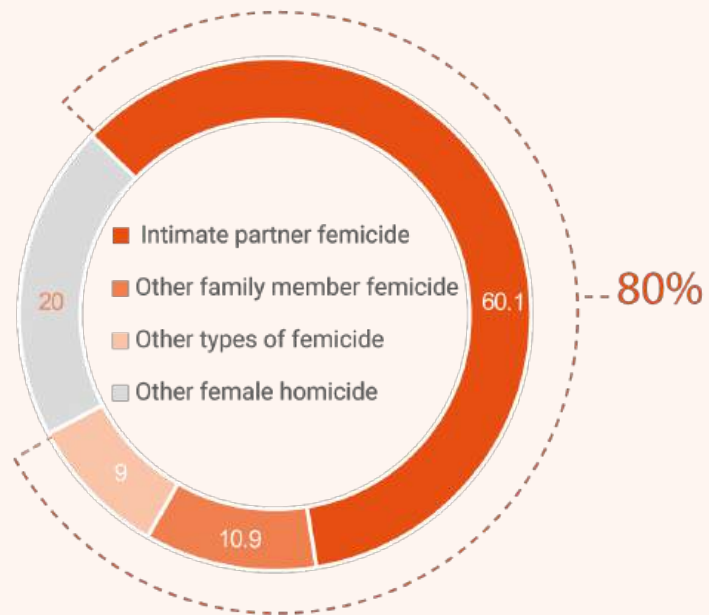
When also considering previous surveys conducted by the South African Medical Research Council, it emerges that the level of intimate partner femicide underwent an encouraging decreasing trend for almost two decades, but the latest survey flags a reversal of the trend. Among the women killed by their partners in 2020/2021, 22 per cent had reported to authorities that they had been subject to partner violence.

The work conducted by the South African Medical Research Council shows the value of empirical research in monitoring femicide and provides a context to assess the effectiveness of existing policies.

¹⁶ See Gender and Health Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council, "20 years of femicide research in South Africa", September 2024.

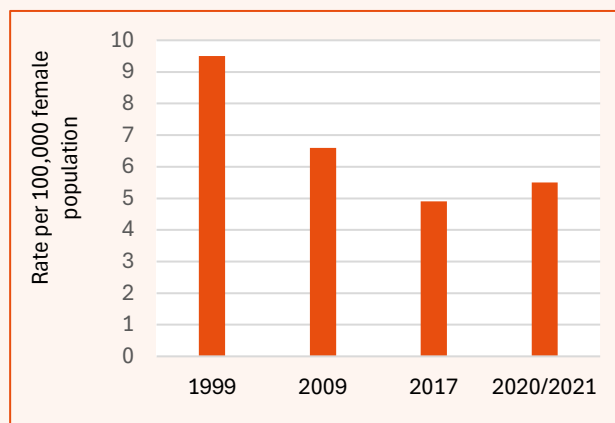
¹⁷ The third component of femicides has been estimated in relation to three criteria identified by the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls: 1) use of sexual violence against the victim; 2) use of extreme violence in killing the woman; and 3) whether the victim worked in the sex industry. It has not been possible to use the other criteria listed in the Statistical framework as related information was unavailable in the datasets used in this research. This means that the estimate of the other forms of femicide (9 per cent) would most probably be higher if information on the other criteria were available.

Shares of different types of femicide among total female homicides, South Africa (2020/21)



Source: South African Medical Research Council.

Rate of intimate partner femicide per 100,000 female population, South Africa (1999, 2009, 2017 and 2020/21)



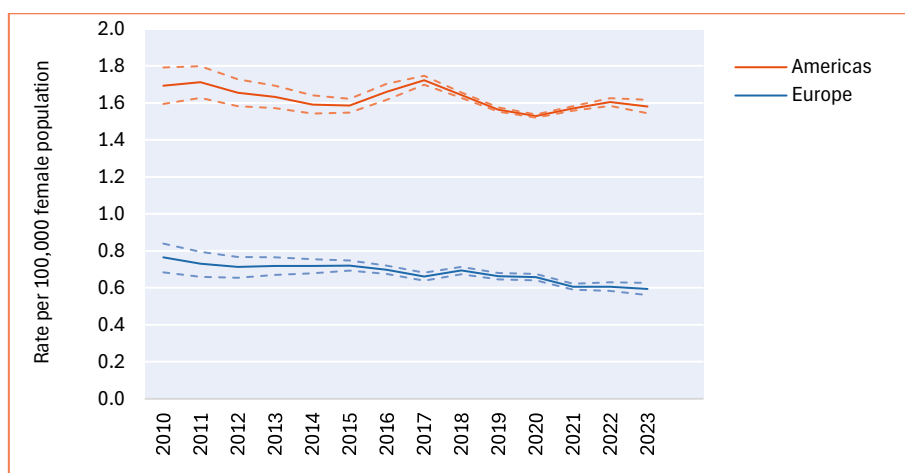
Source: South African Medical Research Council.

TRENDS IN INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY MEMBER FEMICIDE

Trends in the rates of femicide perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members have differed slightly in the Americas and Europe since 2010. Despite undergoing some fluctuations, the intimate partner/family member femicide rate in the Americas was at almost the same level in 2023 as in 2010. By contrast, during the same period, there has been a slow but steady decrease of some 20 per cent in the intimate partner/family member femicide rate in Europe. The long-term trends in femicide in those two regions suggest that real changes, when they happen, are very slow, which indicates that the risk factors and causes that drive this form of interpersonal violence are rooted in practices and norms that do not change quickly.

Unfortunately, because of persistent data gaps in countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania, it is not possible to construct estimates of long-term femicide trends in those three regions.¹⁸

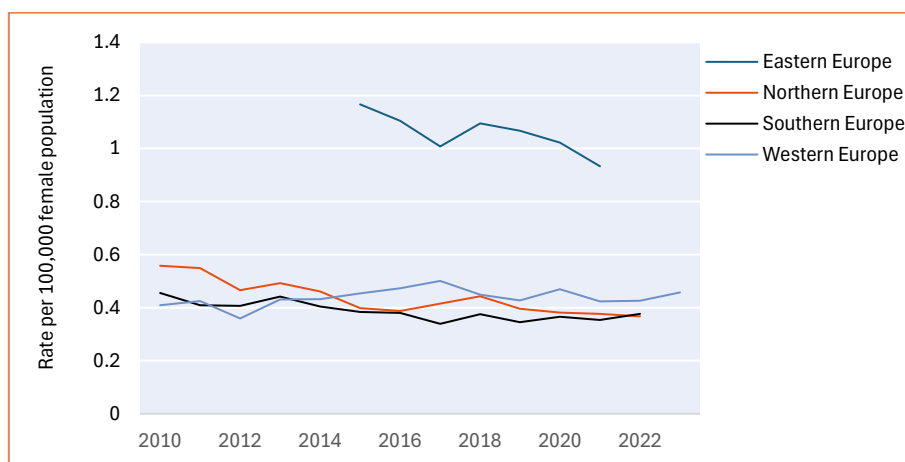
Figure 4: Trends in the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide in the Americas and Europe (2010–2023)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: The dotted lines represent ranges around the estimate and show the extent to which the regional estimate for a specific year relies on reported as opposed to imputed country-level series of intimate partner/family member femicide. The ranges do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. For more information, see the methodological annex to the present research brief.

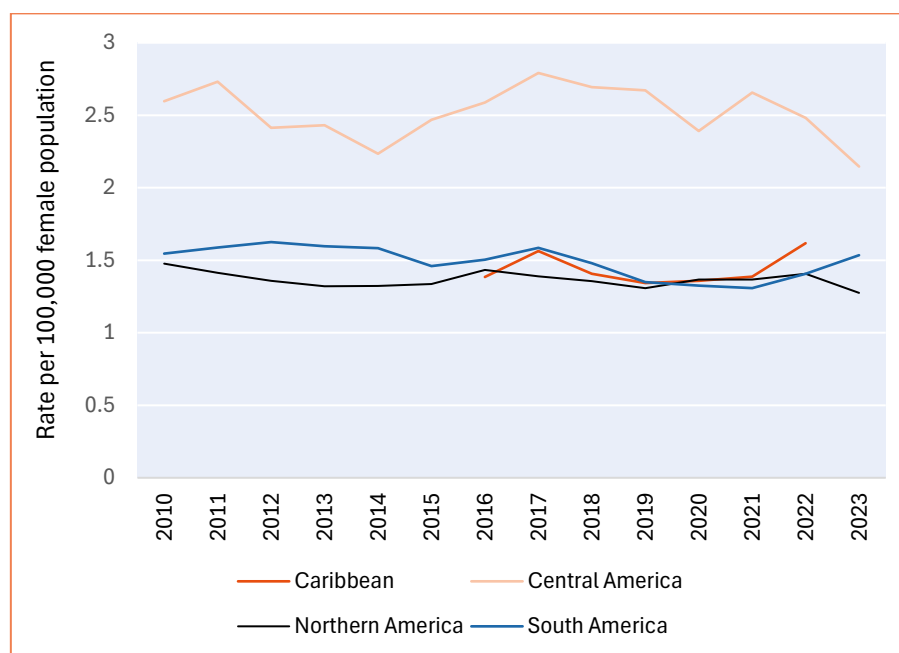
Figure 5: Subregional trends in the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide, Europe (2010–2023)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

¹⁸ For more information on data availability and the estimation model used to input missing data, see the methodological annex to the present research brief.

Figure 6: Subregional trends in the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide, the Americas (2017–2023)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

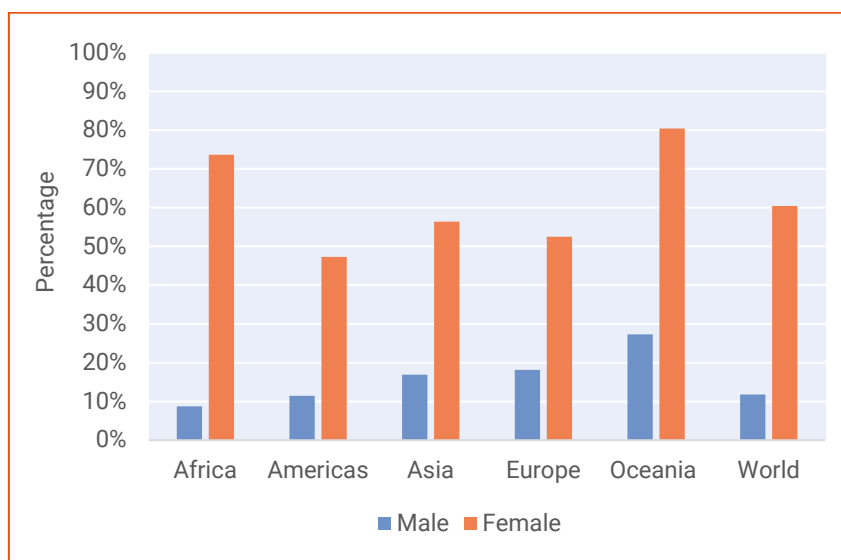
Subregional homicide trends in Europe and in the Americas show the diversity of femicide levels and tendencies within those regions. In countries in Eastern Europe, for example, the femicide rate continues to be roughly twice as high as in other parts of the continent, although it decreased significantly in the period 2015–2021. Since 2010, the intimate partner/family member femicide rate in Northern, Southern and Western Europe has been low, at between 0.4 and 0.6 per 100,000. Nevertheless, while the trend has been a slowly decreasing one both in Northern and Southern Europe (respectively – 34 per cent and – 17 per cent between 2010 and 2022), despite minor annual fluctuations, the intimate partner/family member femicide rate has actually increased slightly in Western Europe (+ 12 per cent between 2010 and 2023).

Subregional trends in the Americas show that intimate partner/family member femicide rate is consistently higher in Central America than in the other parts of the region. That said, the annual fluctuations in the intimate partner/family member femicide rate are not yet indicative of a clear trend in any of the subregions in the Americas.

HOMICIDE IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE HAS A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

Even though men and boys account for the vast majority of homicide victims, women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by lethal violence in the private sphere. An estimated 80 per cent of all homicide victims in 2023 were men while 20 per cent were women, but lethal violence within the family takes a much higher toll on women than men, with almost 60 per cent of all women who were intentionally killed in 2023 being victims of intimate partner/family member homicide. Violence in the family sphere can target both sexes but just 12 per cent of all male homicides in 2023, by contrast, were attributed to killings by intimate partners or other family members. In terms of regional variations, the largest share of female victims of intimate partner/family member homicide in 2023 was recorded in Oceania (80 per cent), followed by Africa (74 per cent), Asia (56 per cent), Europe (53 per cent) and the Americas (47 per cent).

Figure 7: Shares of intimate partner/family member homicides out of all male and female homicides, globally and by region (2023)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

PREVENTING FEMICIDE

In spite of the efforts made by countries to prevent femicides, such killings remain at alarmingly high levels. They are often the culmination of repeated episodes of gender-based violence,¹⁹ which means they are preventable through timely and effective interventions. The ecological model has been put forward in order to explain the root causes of gender-based violence in the context of implementing prevention strategies.²⁰ According to the model, different factors contribute to the perpetuation of the problem of gender-based violence at different levels: the individual, interpersonal relationships, community or organizational settings and society.

¹⁹ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2023* (United Nations publication, 2023) and UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019), booklet on gender-related killing of women and girls.

²⁰ UN Women, *A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women* (New York, 2015).

Several approaches to the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls, including femicide, have been used in recent decades, which can be clustered around six broad areas of intervention.²¹

1. Primary prevention addressed at changing societal norms and attitudes in both women and men and girls and boys through educational curricula and courses. Such tools are aimed at developing relationship skills and fostering a broader understanding of acceptable behaviours and roles associated with women and men in society.
2. Legal responses, whereby a number of countries, in particular in Latin America, have criminalized femicide as a special offence in national criminal codes.²² Other countries have introduced aggravating circumstances for homicide offences that fall under the scope of femicide due to the nature of the victim-perpetrator relationship and the specific context related to the intentional killing of a woman.
3. Criminal justice responses in a number of countries entail the establishment of specialized units within the police, judiciary and prosecution services to investigate and prosecute offences related to gender-based violence, including femicide. Countries such as Canada, Sweden and Jordan, among others, have established such specialized units within their criminal justice systems to facilitate the collection of specific information surrounding violent attacks against women and the investigation of violent crime.²³
4. Multi-agency approaches in the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases have been introduced in several countries in accordance with legal provisions stipulated in domestic violence legislation. Such approaches typically involve stakeholders from relevant entities such as the police, social services, prosecution offices, health services and others to facilitate communication and collaboration throughout the chain of criminal investigations.
5. Public campaigns and advocacy efforts by civil society to condemn all acts of gender-based violence, including femicide, have emerged in recent years and have gained considerable public attention. The “ni una menos” and “me too” movements have played an instrumental role in raising public awareness of such matters and have gathered widespread public condemnation of behaviours that perpetuate gender-based violence.
6. Efforts in the area of data collection include initiatives by specialized agencies within Governments or national statistical offices to collect data on femicide and to release annual reports that analyse national trends and patterns associated with this crime. Civil society organizations have also made efforts to establish “femicide observatories” that collect data from different national sources, including media reports, to paint a picture of the scope of this crime in a particular country. In this context, the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls, endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2022, responds to the need to produce comprehensive and standardized data on femicide.

Specific interventions that have been shown to reduce the risk of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, culminating in femicide include risk assessments conducted by police officers to identify certain risk factors and intervene through different measures, such as placing victims in contact with social service providers²⁴ or enforcing a so-called protection order that prevents the perpetrator from having contact with the victim. Other measures taken to prevent the escalation of intimate partner violence or domestic violence into a killing refer to restrictions surrounding the possession of firearms. Available evidence in this field suggests that possession of a firearm by a

²¹ For further information, see UNODC/Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)/EG.8/2014/CRP.1, “National measures taken to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish gender-related killings of women and girls”, May 2014, UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019), booklet on gender-related killing of women and girls, and UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2023* (United Nations publication, 2023).

²² For further information, see UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019), booklet on gender-related killing of women and girls.

²³ For further information, see UNODC/CCPCJ/EG.8/2014/CRP.1, “National measures taken to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish gender-related killings of women and girls”, May 2014.

²⁴ Koppa, V and Messing, J. T., “Can justice system interventions prevent intimate partner homicide? An analysis of rates of help-seeking prior to fatality”, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 36 (2019).

perpetrator of intimate partner violence significantly increases the odds of a killing²⁵ and also increases the risk of multiple victims by 70 per cent in killings committed in the private sphere.²⁶

To ensure increased effectiveness of protection orders, the removal of a firearm may be added to the enforcement of a protection order, as the two measures combined are more likely to reduce the risk of intimate partner homicide.²⁷

While femicide perpetrated in domestic settings, in particular in intimate partner relations, has been relatively widely documented and studied, which has informed targeted responses to some extent, a lot less is known about the patterns of and trends in gendered violence associated with femicide committed outside the private sphere.

In spite of the allocation of resources by Governments and other relevant stakeholders to implement one or several of the above-mentioned interventions in a given context, femicides persist at levels that continue to be alarmingly high. It appears that such extreme gender-based violence remains deeply embedded in societal norms and gender stereotypes that will require long-term and effective policies to eradicate.



BOX 3: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN EUROPE

Review committees on cases of domestic violence killings have been introduced in recent decades in various high-income countries as a mechanism to conduct multi-disciplinary in-depth reviews after the occurrence of a domestic homicide. Their purpose is to review the circumstances leading up to a domestic violence killing and identify gaps and opportunities for improvements in the response provided by the criminal justice system, social service providers and other relevant sectors.

The methodology for reviewing past cases in-depth by a multi-stakeholder panel or committee has been used, for example, in three European countries, namely Portugal (since 2016), Sweden (since 2012) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (since 2011 in England and Wales and since 2020 in Northern Ireland), with some interesting differences concerning the institutional set up, the scope and timing of the review and the degree to which family members are involved.²⁸ The resource requirements for such reviews vary and different solutions have been put in place to secure required funding in the three countries. While the logistical and administrative support for the review team in Portugal is provided by the Ministry of the Interior, there is no specific funding provided by the Home Office in the United Kingdom, where the cost of reviews is covered at the local level. A common element is that there is no special remuneration for those who conduct reviews, and relevant professionals participate in these review panels as part of their job.

In all three countries, such reviews are based on specific legislative provisions,²⁹ but differ in terms of institutional set up. Although reviews in Portugal and Sweden are centralized processes at the national level, they are convened at the local level in the United Kingdom but regulated centrally with quality

²⁵ Campbell, J. C. et al., "Risk factors for femicide in abuse relationships: results from a multisite case control study", *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, No. 7 (2003).

²⁶ Kivisto A. J. and Porter M., "Firearms use increases the risk of multiple victims in domestic homicides", *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, vol. 48, No. 1 (2020).

²⁷ See Lyons, V. H. et al., "Firearms and protective orders in intimate partner homicides", *Journal of Family Violence*, vol. 36 (2021) and Zeoli, A.M. et al., "Analysis of the strength of legal firearms restrictions for perpetrators of domestic violence and their associations with intimate partner homicide", *American Journal of Epidemiology*, vol. 187 (2017).

²⁸ The information presented here is a summary from the 2023 "UNODC background paper on femicide review committees" (E/CN.15/2023/CRP.6), May 2023, which includes more detailed recommendations and references to the sources of the data and information provided here.

²⁹ In Portugal, the retrospective analysis of homicides related to domestic violence was established in Art. 4-A of the Law 112/2009 of September 16, on the Legal regime applicable to the prevention of domestic violence, the protection and assistance of its victims, amended by Laws No. 19/2013 of February 21, 82-B/2014 of December 31, and 129/2015 of September 3. The Retrospective Analysis of Domestic Violence Homicide Team (Equipa de Análise Retrospectiva de Homicídio em Violência Doméstica, EARHVD) was created in 2016, and the procedure for the review is regulated in Ordinance No. 280/2016. In Sweden, reviews are carried out in accordance with the Act (2007:606) on investigations to prevent certain injuries and deaths, amended in June 2018. In the United Kingdom, domestic homicide reviews became a mandatory legal requirement, in 2011 for England and Wales and in 2020 for Northern Ireland, under Section 9(1) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, and their establishment is currently under consideration in Scotland.

assurance carried out by a multi-stakeholder panel of the Home Office. This difference is also reflected in the composition of the review team. In Portugal, review teams are composed of permanent members who remain in their function for several years. By contrast, review panels in the United Kingdom are ad-hoc and established for particular death reviews. In the case of Portugal, the review team reports annually to a broad range of government ministers responsible for the areas of internal administration, justice, citizenship and gender equality, social security and health. In Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare convenes femicide reviews and reports to the Government biannually. In the United Kingdom, review panels report to a specific ministry, namely the Home Office.

Reviews in all three countries are conducted by committees composed of representatives from public agencies across multiple sectors, such as the police, prosecutor's offices, medical examiners, health (including mental health) services, social services and domestic violence service providers.³⁰ Participation by non-governmental organizations is envisaged in Portugal to the extent that they are involved with the specific case under review, whereas the statutory guidance in the United Kingdom states that voluntary and community sector organizations may have valuable information on the victim and/or perpetrator and directs that specialist or local domestic violence and abuse service representation must be included.

The scope and timing of the review varies across the three countries. While in the United Kingdom, reviews are intended to cover all cases of domestic violence homicide occurring in the country, in Portugal, the review team selects between 6 and 10 cases annually, considering factors such as social impact, previous involvement of agencies and, in particular, if the victim was under 18 years of age or otherwise considered particularly vulnerable, or if there was a previous report related to the violence. In Sweden, in addition to the crime, there must have been a need for protection for the National Board of Health and Welfare to carry out an investigation. In the case of adults, it is required that the adult had been in need of protection or support and help to change their situation, such as in cases where the victim or the perpetrator had sought support and help for mental illness or previous exposure to violence. The timing of reviews in the United Kingdom is also unique, as reviews can be initiated in parallel to criminal proceedings, whereas in Portugal and Sweden, reviews are initiated only after all legal procedures are completed.

The involvement of families and friends of victims is one of the distinctive characteristics of reviews in the United Kingdom. The Home Office Guidance stresses that family involvement may help provide understanding of the victim's reality; to identify any barriers the victim faced to reporting abuse and learning why any interventions did not work for them. This goes beyond the victim's family and extends to friends, neighbours, community members and professionals. It is considered that the involvement of families, friends and other support networks leads to a number of benefits, ranging from obtaining information not recorded in official records to contributing to their own healing and recovery process. The Home Office Guidance even foresees the possibility of approaching the family of the perpetrator, as well as other networks to whom victims and perpetrators may have disclosed relevant information, such as friends, employers and colleagues, health professionals and local professionals in domestic violence prevention work. It also notes, however, that both in the families of perpetrators and victims

³⁰ In Portugal, these include the Prosecution Service (whose representative is also the coordinator of the team), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Administration and the Public Administration body responsible for the area of citizenship and gender equality, as well as representatives of the security force in the area where the crime has occurred and the National Commission for the Promotion of Rights and Protection of Children and Young People in cases involving children. In the United Kingdom, specifically in England and Wales, review panels include chief officers of police, local authorities, local probation boards, National Health Service (NHS) England, integrated care boards, providers of probation services, local health boards and NHS trusts. Other agencies not named in legislation, for example, the Crown Prosecution Service, representatives from housing associations and social landlords, HM Prison Service, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, medical doctors, dentists and teachers may also have a role in the review and be called upon to provide an Individual Management Review as required. In Sweden, although the review is conducted by a group of internal experts within the National Board of Health and Welfare, each review includes the contribution of experts from different authorities (depending on the agencies involved in the case that were in contact with the perpetrator or the victim prior to the crime), such as the employment agency, the Crime Prevention Council, the Insurance Fund, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate, Correctional Service, the Migration Agency, the Police Authority, the Forensic Medicine Agency, the School Inspectorate and the Swedish Prosecution Authority.

there may be potential witnesses or even defendants, which requires close coordination with investigative officers. In Portugal, the terms of reference of the national review team also provide details on how the participation of victim/perpetrator families should take place. By contrast, no involvement of families and friends is envisaged in Sweden.

The systematic documentation and assessment of the impact of the recommendations formulated by multi-stakeholder in-depth reviews varies and the impact of the reviews is still at the early stage of research. While monitoring of the implementation of recommendations is explicitly foreseen in some jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, monitoring arrangements appear to be underdeveloped in most cases and the implementation of recommendations appears to be closely related to the position or seniority of review team members within their respective institution. In the United Kingdom, the Home Office Guidance all recommendations are made taking into consideration SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Reliable, Timely) and mandates a targeted and achievable action plan to help achieve the purposes of reviews. One key challenge identified is that the local Community Safety Partnership in charge of monitoring the implementation of the actions set out in the action plan lacks the power and capacity to follow-up on recommendations addressed to national government departments. In Portugal, a 2022 assessment concluded that the reviews have an impact at different levels, such as improving prevention and awareness, qualified training, and promoting self-reflection on practices, specifically through recommendations issued by the review team. Most consulted professionals working on domestic violence valued the work of the review team and referred to its positive influence on their professional practice.



BOX 4: HARMONIZED SCALE FOR FEMICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT IN COLOMBIA

(Contribution by UN Women Colombia)

In Colombia, according to data collected by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses (INMLCF)), 531 women were killed by their intimate partner, including their former partner, between 2014 and 2017.³¹ In the case of 35.4 per cent of those women, a forensic doctor had previously certified a history of partner violence, which means that a competent authority had previously known about the violence they were experiencing.³²

In situations of intimate partner violence, it can be challenging to evaluate the risk of extreme or lethal violence for women. The need to develop more accurate risk assessment tools became more apparent in 2020, when it was perceived that the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to increased violence against women and girls.³³ In this context, it became clear that two protocols for assessing femicide risk, one by INMLCF and the other by the Attorney General, were used for activating the response of authorities in cases of intimate partner violence. The two protocols collected relevant information and assessed the risk based on standard non-subjective measures,³⁴ enabling the women themselves, their family members and the relevant authorities to be alerted about the femicide risk.

³¹ ONU Mujeres (UN Women), *Evaluación de la Aplicación del Protocolo de Valoración del Riesgo Femicida (2014-2017): Resumen Ejecutivo* (Bogotá, 2019).

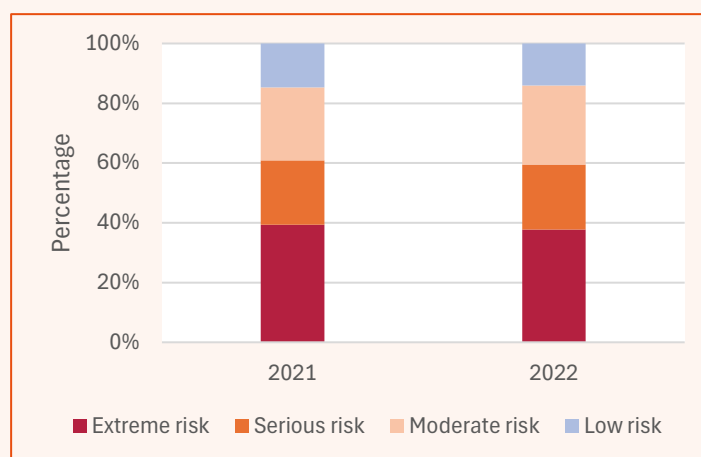
³² INMLyCF. Protocolo para la valoración del riesgo de la violencia mortal contra mujeres para la prevención del feminicidio y la violencia feminicida, 2019.

³³ UN Women, *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against Women during Covid-10, public awareness campaign*. Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

³⁴ The National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science compiles information about the reported case, family and personal history, personal background and previous cases and coping strategies. The Attorney General compiles information about risk factors, the victim's perceived risk, profile of the perpetrator, violent behaviour, etc. Some examples of questions include: Has physical violence increased in severity or frequency during the last year? Does he have an arm? Does he control most of your daily activities? For example, does he tell you who you can be friends with, when you can see your family, how much money you can use? Is he jealous with you constantly and violently? Does he follow you, harass you, or leave threatening notes or voicemails, or does he call you when you don't want to? Does he belong or has he belonged to gang groups? Has he been part of the military or police?

However, as the existence of two separate risk assessment tools could lead to different outcomes, it became imperative to develop an integrated tool that could be used by both entities to respond to such cases in a consistent and clear manner.

Shares of risk levels of falling victim to femicide for women experiencing intimate partner violence, based on the implementation of the integrated protocol in Colombia (2021–2022)



Source: UN Women Colombia.

A standard protocol for assessing the risk of lethal partner violence was thus developed by integrating the information collected by INMLCF and the Attorney General. This tool enables women affected by gender-based violence and the general public to carry out a self-evaluation in order to identify the level of risk of gender-based violence and, together with the relevant authorities, develop a safety plan with immediate and urgent actions to mitigate the risk of femicide.

The integrated protocol was first used in 2021. During the first two years of its implementation, it was assessed that 35 to 40 per cent of women experiencing partner violence were exposed to an extreme risk of falling victim to femicide.

Although the results of the impact of the integrated protocol on reducing the risk of femicide are not yet available, results have already been positive in terms of administrative procedures as the protocol has promoted harmonization and coordination of procedures across institutions. Once a high-risk case has been detected, the Attorney General is promptly alerted and the required measures can be activated based on the level of risk. Guidance on the specific actions to take in such cases is provided by the *Instrumento de Seguimiento a Mujeres con Riesgo de Femicidio en el Marco de la Emergencia por COVID-19*, developed by the District Secretary of Women of Bogotá,³⁵ which promotes a specific follow-up strategy in cases of femicide risk in order to manage that risk and protect women's lives.

³⁵ONU Mujeres (UN Women), *Instrumento de Seguimiento a Mujeres con Riesgo de Femicidio en el Marco de la Emergencia por Covid-19* (Bogotá, 2020) (Instrument to provide a response to women at risk of femicide in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). Available at https://colombia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Colombia/Documentos/Publicaciones/2020/11/3_instrumento_segui_miento.pdf.

PRODUCING FEMICIDE DATA: AN UNMET CHALLENGE

While it is encouraging that several countries are taking steps to test and implement the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls³⁶ and academic research is increasingly referring to this international standard as an instrument for producing high quality and comparable data on femicide, the availability of femicide data in most countries remains a challenge.



BOX 5: AN INNOVATIVE APPLICATION OF THE UNODC-UN WOMEN STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Although primarily aimed at facilitating national efforts to collect more comprehensive and disaggregated data, the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings of women and girls has also been used to frame academic research and analysis of existing data on female homicide. In the literature, “Identifying femicide using the United Nations statistical framework: exploring the feasibility of sex/gender-related motives and indicators to inform prevention”, an article published in 2024,³⁷ uses the criteria identified in the statistical framework to analyse existing data collected by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA). The article focuses on a dataset of women and girls killed in Canada in 2018.

The data analysed in the article relate to the total sample of the 169 women and girls killed in Canada in 2018, which was the first year data was collected by CFOJA and the year for which the most comprehensive information was available. The analysis revealed that at least 76 per cent of the female homicides documented in 2018 are to be considered femicides, while taking into account that in a significant share of cases (18 per cent) there was not sufficient information to state the nature of the killing.

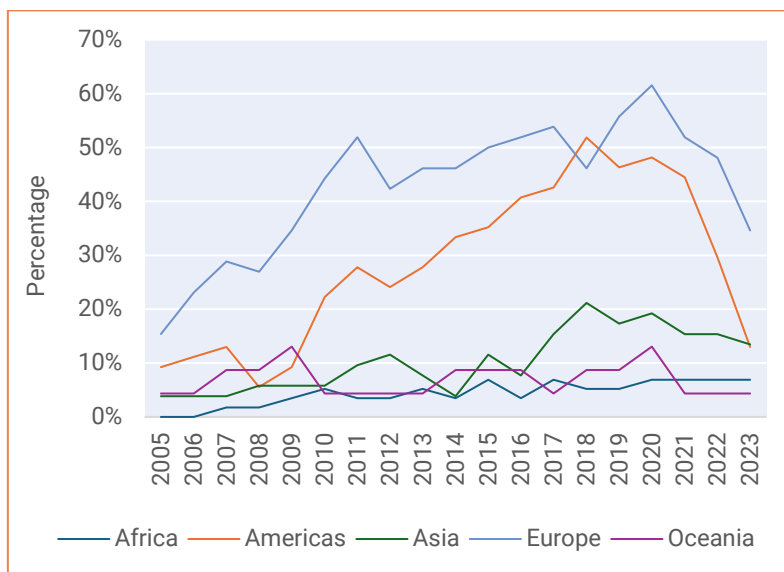
The article praises the utility of the statistical framework for producing more comprehensive data on femicide and stresses the utility of detailed data suggested in the framework for developing and monitoring violence prevention policies. It emphasizes that collecting data on femicide – as opposed to just on female homicide – is necessary, not only for developing more effective prevention initiatives and more appropriate punishments in order to reduce impunity, but also to raise awareness, increase public education and strengthen the capacity of those responding to gender-based violence against women and girls.

The UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework identifies data on killings of women and girls by their partners or other family members as the first step in producing comprehensive and comparable data on femicide. Important differences exist between regions in terms of the availability of intimate partner/family member femicide data, with Europe and the Americas traditionally registering the largest shares of countries publishing such data. In recent years, however, all the regions have experienced a significant decrease in data availability.

³⁶ Beyond the work conducted in France and South Africa illustrated in this research brief, other countries are piloting the Statistical framework with technical guidance by UNODC (Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Jamaica and Mongolia) or by UN Women (Albania, Djibouti, Lesotho and Uzbekistan).

³⁷ Dawson, M., Angus, H. and Zecha, A., “Identifying femicide using the United Nations statistical framework: exploring the feasibility of sex/gender-related motives and indicators to inform prevention”, *International Sociology*, vol. 39, No.3 (2024), pp. 309–331.

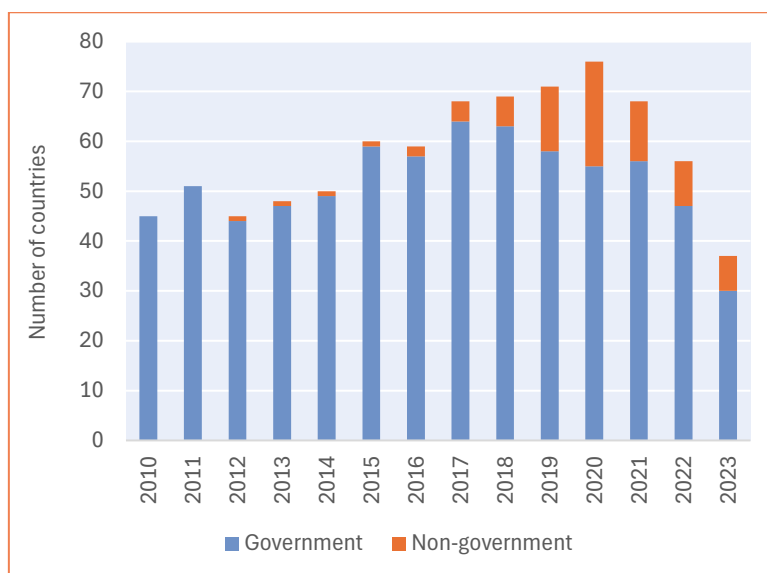
Figure 8: Shares of countries with available data on intimate partner/family member femicides, by region (2005–2023)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset.

Over the past two decades, the number of countries reporting data on the killing of women by intimate partners or other family members has increased slowly, peaking in 2020 (75 countries). However, the number decreased after that and by 2023 was half the number in 2020. Data produced by academic research or civil society organisations are sometimes used to overcome data gaps, but these complementary data sources have no impact on the decreasing trend.

Figure 9: Number of countries with available data on intimate partner/family member femicides, by type of source (2010–2023)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset.

As the accountability of countries' efforts to fight gender-related killings is also measured by the quality and availability of their statistics on femicide, significant efforts are needed to reverse the negative trend in terms of data availability.

METHODOLOGICAL ANNEX

Data

Data sources

The analysis presented in this brief and the estimates produced at the global and regional levels are based on available data for 112 countries or territories, for which at least one data point is available for the period 2010–2023. These data were primarily submitted to UNODC by Member States through the annual United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS).³⁸ UN-CTS collects administrative data on crime, including on the total number of homicide victims and its disaggregation by victim/perpetrator relationship, which is used to identify femicides perpetrated by their intimate partner or other family members.

In most cases, these data are sourced from Member States' criminal justice systems. In a few cases, however, the data are sourced from the public health system.³⁹ Where needed and applicable, homicide data collected through the UN-CTS are supplemented with data collected directly from government sources (such as websites and publications) or, in some cases, from non-governmental sources.⁴¹ When country-level data on femicide by intimate partners or other family members are missing, other relevant data are collected and processed for the purpose of producing global and regional estimates. This includes data referring to victims of criminal offences such as femicide/feminicide, dowry death and honour killing in countries where such criminal offences are established by national law.

Population data used to calculate sex-disaggregated homicide rates (per 100,000 population) were sourced from the United Nations 2023 Revision of World Population Prospects.⁴⁰

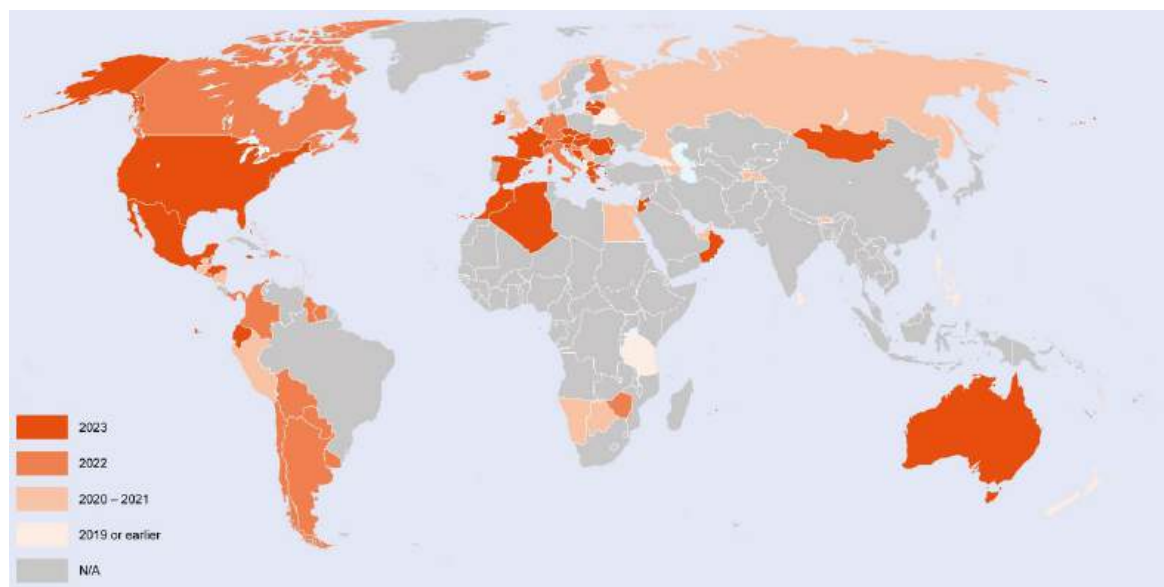
Data validation

All homicide data collected through UN-CTS as well as external data sources are validated to ensure that they meet a set of minimal quality criteria, including consistency with the standard definition of intentional homicide in the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS),⁴¹ coherence of country time trends (to ensure the use of data with consistent counting rules and reporting authorities), and internal consistency of homicide disaggregations (for example, to ensure that the male and female homicides add up to the reported total, or that the reported number of female intimate partner/family member homicides does not exceed the reported number of female homicides).⁴² In some countries, the perpetrators of a large share of intentional homicides remain unidentified and this can heavily affect the validity of data on femicides by intimate partners or other family members. In such cases, the data validation process adjusts available data for the purpose of producing global and regional estimates of femicides by intimate partners or other family members.

Data coverage

Internationally comparable data on female victims of intentional homicide and femicide perpetrated by an intimate partner or other family member remain patchy, especially in Africa, Asia and Oceania, but are available for a large enough number of countries and territories to enable the production of global and regional estimates.

⁴¹ Additional data collected by UNODC are shared with Member States for technical review before publication.

Map 1: Countries/territories by latest year of data available on femicide perpetrated by an intimate partner or other family member (2010–2023)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Source: UNODC homicide dataset.

Table 1: Coverage of femicide data, by region (2010–2023)

Region	Number of countries/territories in region	Number of countries with available data for at least 1 year in the period 2010–2023		Number of countries with available data for at least 3 years in the period 2010–2023	
		Female victims of intentional homicide	Victims of intimate partner/family member femicide ⁴²	Female victims of intentional homicide	Victims of intimate partner/family member femicide
Africa	58	19	10	16	6
Americas	54	43	34	40	31
Asia	52	38	22	34	14
Europe	52	47	42	44	35
Oceania	23	8	4	5	2
World	239	155	112	139	88

⁴² In 24 countries (11 in the Americas, 2 in Africa, 6 in Asia, 4 in Europe and 1 in Oceania), data on other types of gender-related killings such as “femicides” or “feminicides” were used as proxy measures given that reliable data on female intimate partner/family member homicides are not available. These proxy measures were primarily used to capture information on country-level trends. For a detailed comparison of data on female intimate partner/family member homicides and “femicides/feminicides”, see UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019), Booklet 5, p. 25.

Methodology for producing estimates

The methods used for estimating the number of female intimate partner/family member homicides at the global and regional levels are aimed at making the best possible use of available data. For each regional aggregate, the number of female intimate partner/family member homicides should correspond to the sum of all national data on such killings in the respective region in each year. However, for many countries, data on female intimate partner/family member homicides are not available, or data are only available for some years. As a result, the sample of countries with available data is different for each year. If left unaddressed, this issue would result in inconsistencies, as regional aggregates would be drawn from a different set of countries each year.

Imputation of missing values at the country level

The imputation of missing values at the country level follows a three-step procedure, whereby: 1) the values in the total homicide series are imputed if missing; 2) the total homicide series is used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female homicide series;⁴³ and 3) the female homicide series is then used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female intimate partner/family member homicide series.

- Imputation of the total homicide series is performed on the country-level *rate* of total homicides per 100,000 population.
- Imputation of the female homicide series is performed on the country-level *ratio* of female homicides over total homicides (where data on both indicators are available).
- Imputation of the female intimate partner/family member homicide series is performed on the country-level *ratio* of female intimate partner/family member homicides over total female homicides (where data on both indicators are available).⁴⁴

For all three series, the following three-step imputation approach is applied:

- If a country has just one available data point in the respective series,⁴⁵ all missing values are set equal to this single available data point. Given that the estimated series is either a rate (if the imputation refers to total homicide) or a ratio based on that rate (if the imputation refers to female homicide or female intimate partner/family member homicide), this approach accounts for population growth over time and does not mean that the series is constant in absolute terms.
- If a country has two to eight available data points in the respective series, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the beginning (or end) of the series are filled with the earliest (or latest) available data point.
- If a country has more than eight available data points in the respective time series, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the end of the time series are imputed using an exponential smoothing approach.⁴⁶

Estimation of regional aggregates

Once the series have been computed at the national level, they are aggregated at the regional level using the following approach:

⁴³ Coverage for female homicide is generally better than for female intimate partner/family member homicide.

⁴⁴ Validation checks ensure that this ratio is lower than or equal to one.

⁴⁵ The three-step imputation approach is applied to the period 2000–2023.

⁴⁶ For more information, see https://afit-r.github.io/ts_exp_smoothing.

- Regional homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional homicide rate per 100,000 population with the total population of the respective region (divided by 100,000).⁴⁷
- Regional female homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional ratios of female homicides by total homicides using the total homicides of the respective region.
- Regional totals of intimate partner/family member femicide are calculated for each year by applying the regional ratios between intimate partner/family member femicide and total female homicides to the total female homicide series of the respective region.

Finally, regional estimates are aggregated to compute the global number of female intimate partner/family member homicides.

Computation of uncertainty intervals

As explained above, global and regional estimates of female intimate partner/family member homicides are produced based on available national data and through a statistical model imputing missing values at the country level. To account for estimation error due to the imputation of missing values at the country level, the global and regional estimates are accompanied by intervals of uncertainty. These bands are intended to represent how the uncertainty due to imputation varies across time and regions. It is important to note that these bands do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. The procedure to compute the uncertainty intervals closely follows the approach used in the *Global Study on Homicide 2019*.⁴⁸

In the case of countries and territories with at least one year of data on female intimate partner/family member homicide (in the period 2010–2022), a penalty of plus and minus 1.9 per cent was added⁴⁹ to the value of each estimate for each year of distance between the estimate and the closest observed female intimate partner/family member homicide value. For countries and territories without any reported data on female intimate partner/family member homicide, a maximum “penalty” is applied in the sense that the distance to the closest observed values is assumed to be 14 years. Ranges around global and regional trends were obtained by adding up – for each year – the compounded ranges of all countries that are a part of each regional aggregate. This approach to calculating uncertainty intervals means that countries with fewer years of reported data have wider ranges around the national trend and contribute more to the ranges around the trends in their respective regions. In addition, regions with a greater number of countries without any reported data have even wider ranges.

⁴⁷ In order to better reflect the diversity of homicide levels across African countries, a different approach was used to calculate the regional homicide estimate for Africa, which rests on the classification of countries into three groups according to the level of insecurity. For more information, see the methodological annex to UNODC, *The Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019).

⁴⁸ See the methodological annex to UNODC, *The Global Study on Homicide 2019* (United Nations publication, 2019).

⁴⁹ The 1.9 per cent represent half the global average change in the ratio between intimate partner/family member femicides and total female homicides. For the two regions with sufficient data coverage, Europe and the Americas, half the regional average change in the ratio between intimate partner/family member femicides and total female homicides is used instead (Europe: 2.4 per cent; Americas: 2.2 per cent).

Globally, approximately 51,100 women and girls were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in 2023. This means that 60 per cent of the almost 85,000 women and girls killed intentionally during the year were murdered because of gender-related motives. Other forms of femicide exist beyond the killing of women and girls in the domestic sphere and some countries have started to quantify them by implementing the UNODC-UN Women Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings.

Available data also confirm that a significant share of women killed by their intimate partners had previously reported some form of physical, sexual or psychological violence by their partner. This suggests that many killings of women are preventable. When monitoring systems are in place, a range of measures to prevent femicides is possible.

The number of countries reporting 2023 data on the killing of women and girls by intimate partners and other family members was half the number in 2020. Even though United Nations Member States are adopting measures to tackle femicide, significant efforts to reverse the negative trend in terms of data availability would increase government accountability for addressing gender-based violence against women and girls.

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