

GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS (FEMICIDE/FEMINICIDE)

*Global estimates of female
intimate partner/family-related
homicides in 2022*



*The title of this research brief refers to 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 UN Statistical Commission in March 2022. The term “femicide” in this publication is used to refer to all types of gender-related killings of women and girls.

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PREFACE

This is the second joint UNODC and UN Women global research brief on the gender-related killings of women and girls. It is with deep concern and outrage that we report that the number of women and girls killed intentionally in 2022 – nearly 89,000 – is the highest yearly number recorded in the past 20 years.

While overall homicide numbers globally have started to fall after a peak in 2021, the number of female homicides is not decreasing. Most of these killings of women and girls are gender-related, and more than half of all female homicides are committed by intimate partners or other family members.

The risks of gender-based violence and femicide are only rising as our world is engulfed in conflict, humanitarian emergencies, environmental and economic crises and displacement.

Global action is needed, most of all, to stop the violence from occurring in the first place.

We need strong political support, across regions and at the highest level, to drive stronger investment in prevention.

The 2023 UNiTE campaign theme for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November to 10 December) is Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls.

Governments need to invest in institutions that are more inclusive and well-equipped to end impunity and help victims, from frontline responders to the judiciary.

Governments also need to invest in and support data collection and research. Evidence and data of femicides outside the family and perpetrated in the public sphere remains extremely limited. More systematic and comparable data are needed to better understand, address and prevent situations of vulnerability to gender-based violence and femicide.

UNODC and UN Women have joined forces to improve data collection through the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”). We have seen some signs of improvement: 99 countries had at least one data point on female intimate partner/family-related homicide in the period 2016-2022, up from 74 countries in 2009-2015. But more support is required, especially for developing countries which lack the funding and capacities to improve femicide reporting and responses, in line with commitments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is also a strong need for substantial and impactful funding for women’s rights organizations who play a key role in providing services for survivors at a local level.

Investing in prevention makes sense and there is more evidence than ever about what works. To guide efforts, we have the RESPECT Women Framework, which provides member states, development partners and the private sector options for investing in evidence-based strategies that have demonstrated positive results in the prevention and response to violence against women and girls.

On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, we call on governments, development partners and all stakeholders to invest in prevention, to end the violence before it is too late.



Ghada Waly, Executive Director,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Sima Bahous,
Executive Director, UN Women

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Globally, nearly 89,000 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2022, the highest yearly number recorded in the past two decades. Moreover, available data suggest that while the overall number of homicides globally has begun to fall in 2022 after a spike in 2021, the number of female homicides are not decreasing.
- Most killings of women and girls are gender motivated. In 2022, around 48,800 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members. This means that, on average, more than 133 women or girls were killed every day by someone in their own family.
- While most homicides worldwide are committed against men and boys (80% in 2022), women and girls are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence in the home: they represent approximately 53% of all victims of killings in the home and 66% of all victims of intimate partner killings.
- Women and girls in all regions across the world are affected by this type of gender-based violence. With an estimated 20,000 victims in 2022, Africa has – for the first time since 2013, when UNODC began publishing regional estimates¹ - surpassed Asia as the region with the highest number of victims in absolute terms. In 2022, Africa was also the region with the highest number of victims relative to the size of its female population (2.8 victims per 100,000 women), although the estimates are subject to uncertainty due to limited data availability.
- Between 2010 and 2022, Europe witnessed an average reduction in the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides (by 21%), albeit with differences across sub-regions and with some setbacks in Western and Southern Europe, especially since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.
- The Americas have seen diverging sub-regional trends in the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in recent years. While Central and South America experienced a decline in yearly killings between 2017 and 2022 (by 10% and 8% respectively), Northern America witnessed a significant increase (by 29%),² while the Caribbean recorded a more modest increase (by 8%).
- Limited data availability means that the estimation of over-time trends is not possible in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. However, available national trend data from several Asian countries suggest that the femicide risk for women and girls might be slowly decreasing, while limited available data from African countries are either not indicative of clear trends, or point towards an increase in female killings since 2021.
- Global data availability on gender-related killings is gradually increasing: while 74 countries had at least one data point on female intimate partner/family-related homicide in the period 2009-2015, this increased to 99 countries in the period 2016-2022. The UN system has taken concrete steps to assist Member States in improving data collection and reporting, including through the introduction and support for implementation of the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls.³

¹ UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2013 (Vienna, 2013)

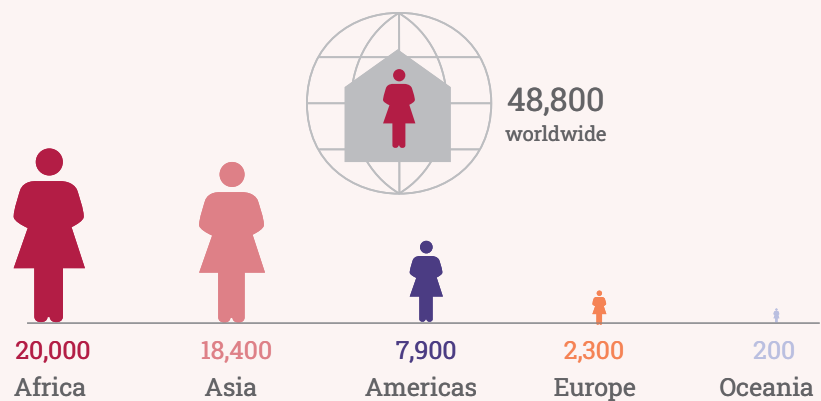
² The regional trend in Northern America is strongly influenced by the national trend in the United States, which has been affected by the transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in 2021.

³ UNODC and UN Women, Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”) (Vienna, 2021).

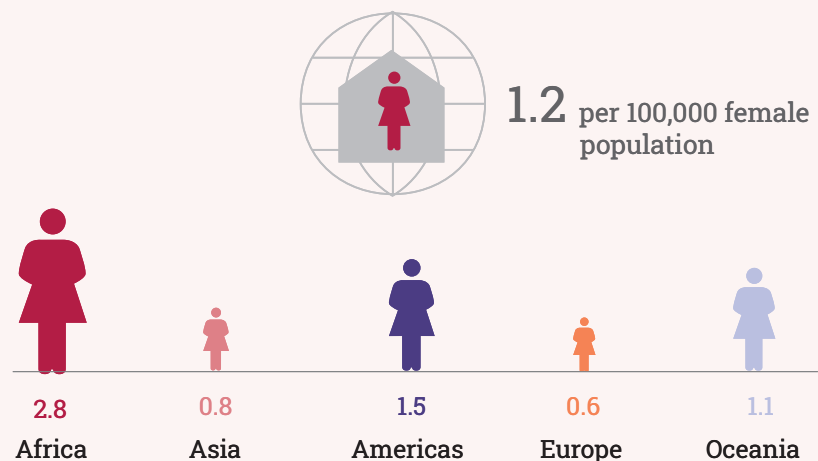
Global estimates

Women and girls in all regions are affected by gender-based killings. In 2022, Africa was the region with the largest absolute number of killings, and also with the highest level of violence relative to the size of its female population.

Total female intimate partner/family-related homicides
2022



Rates of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population
2022

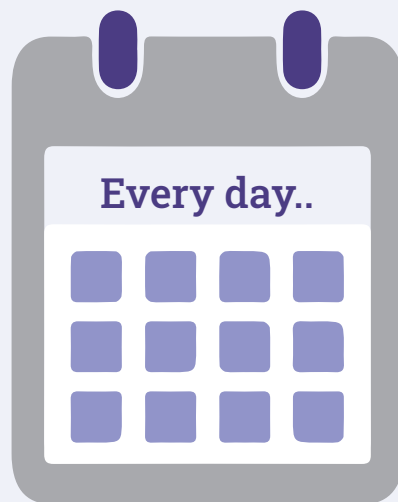


Total number of women killed by intimate partners or other family members

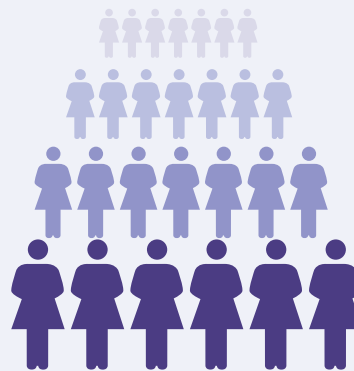
In 2022, around 48,800 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members. This means that, on average, more than 133 women or girls were killed every day by someone in their own family.



48,800
worldwide



More than
133



women or girls are killed by
someone in their own family

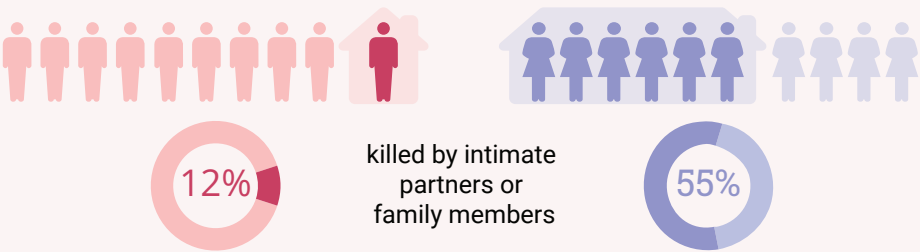
Gender dimension of homicide

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

Male and female share of homicide victims
2022



Share of male and female homicide victims killed by intimate partners/family members
2022



INTRODUCTION

Gender-related killings of women and girls, also referred to as femicide and feminicide,⁴ can broadly be defined as intentional killings committed on the grounds of gender-related factors. These can include the ideology of men's entitlement and privilege over women, social norms regarding masculinity, and the need to assert male control or power, enforce gender roles, or prevent, discourage or punish what is considered to be unacceptable female behaviour.⁵ Femicide represents the lethal end point of a continuum of multiple, overlapping and interconnected forms of gender-based violence. Such homicides usually follow prior experiences of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.⁶

The majority of intentional homicides of women and girls are gender-related – and estimates may understate the problem because in roughly four out of ten cases there is insufficient information recorded to identify gender-related motivations.⁷ Based on available evidence, the largest share of gender-related killings of women and girls are homicides perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members. While the vast majority of homicide victims recorded globally are men and boys, women and girls are, in every region of the world, disproportionately affected by homicide in the home.⁸

This research brief focuses on female victims of intimate partner and family-related homicide, primarily because data on this type of homicide are more readily available and comparable than data on gender-related killings that take place outside the home. However, it must be emphasized that gender-related killings of women and girls can take place in different situations within both the private and public spheres, and within different contexts of victim-perpetrator relationship. Examples include homicides as a result of intimate partner violence, as well as murder following rape, so-called “honour killings”, dowry-related killings, killings of women accused of witchcraft and gender-motivated homicides connected with armed conflict or with gangs, trafficking in persons and other forms of organized crime.

The potential for stressors - including conflict, humanitarian and environmental crises, and displacement - to exacerbate gender-based violence and the risk of gender-related killings has become an increasing focus of research.⁹ However, more systematic and comparable data are needed to better understand, address and prevent situations of vulnerability to gender-based violence and femicide.¹⁰ In response, UNODC and UN Women have partnered to develop the *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)*, which was approved by the United Nation's Statistical Commission in March 2022, with the aim of supporting countries to improve collection and analysis of data on all types of femicide, and to inform advocacy, policies and programmes to end femicide.¹¹

⁴ See UN General Assembly resolutions A/RES/68/191 adopted in 2013 and A/RES/70/176 adopted in 2016.

⁵ UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)* (Vienna, 2021).

⁶ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (Vienna, 2019).

⁷ UNODC, *Data Matters 5* (Vienna, 2022).

⁸ UNODC, *Data Matters 3* (Vienna, 2021).

⁹ See UN Women, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023* (New York, 2023), p.23; and UN Women, *Disasters, crises and violence against women: Evidence from big data analysis* (New York, 2023).

¹⁰ Data availability on female intimate partner/family-related homicide is more limited in crisis countries: while 51% or 91 out of 178 countries classified as non-fragile by the OECD have at least one data point in the period 2015-2022, only 15% or 9 out of 61 fragile countries do. For more information on the OECD's multidimensional fragility framework, see OECD (2022), *States of Fragility 2022*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

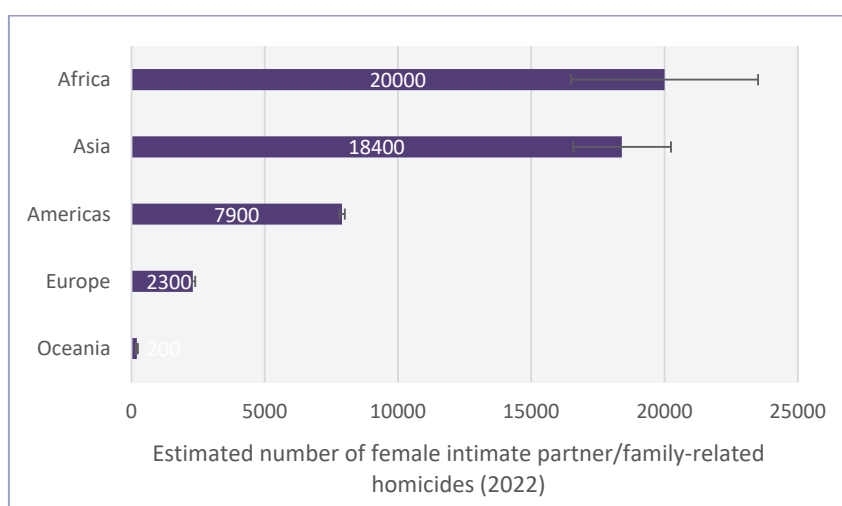
¹¹ UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)* (Vienna, 2021).

EXTENT OF FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS

In 2022, approximately 48,800 (43,200 – 54,400) women and girls were killed globally by their intimate partners or other family members (including fathers, mothers, uncles, and brothers).¹² This means that around 55% of the estimated total of 88,900 female homicide victims recorded in 2022 were killed by someone in their own family.¹³

With an estimated 20,000 victims (16,500 – 23,500), Africa recorded the largest number of female intimate partner/family-related killings in 2022. This means that Africa has – for the first time since 2013, when UNODC began publishing regional estimates - surpassed Asia as the region with the highest number of victims in absolute terms, although the estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty due to limited data availability. In Asia, an estimated 18,400 (16,600 – 20,200) women and girls were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in 2022, while the Americas recorded 7,900 (7,800 – 8,000), Europe recorded 2,300 (2,200 – 2,400) and Oceania recorded around 200 such killings (Figure 1).¹⁴ Differences in absolute numbers between world regions are also a reflection of differences in the size of the regional populations, so it is important to also examine the extent of the problem in terms of rates (per 100,000 female population).

FIGURE 1: Estimated number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide, by region (2022)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide Dataset.

Note: Uncertainty bands represent possible estimation errors due to 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.

¹² The global and regional estimates are produced based on available national data and through a statistical model imputing missing values at the country level. They are complemented by an interval of uncertainty that accounts for possible estimation errors due to the imputation of missing values at the country level. The bands do not represent probabilistic confidence intervals. For more information, see the methodological annex.

¹³ The 2022 estimate of 48,800 victims is not directly comparable to the 2021 figure (45,000) published in *Data Matters 5* and the 2020 figure (47,000 victims) published in *Data Matters 3* due to improvements in the coverage of national data and refinements in the statistical model. The different global estimates for 2020, 2021 and 2022 should not be interpreted as evidence of a trend in the global number of gender-related killings in the private sphere over this time span.

¹⁴ Regional groupings of countries are based on the M49 standard, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

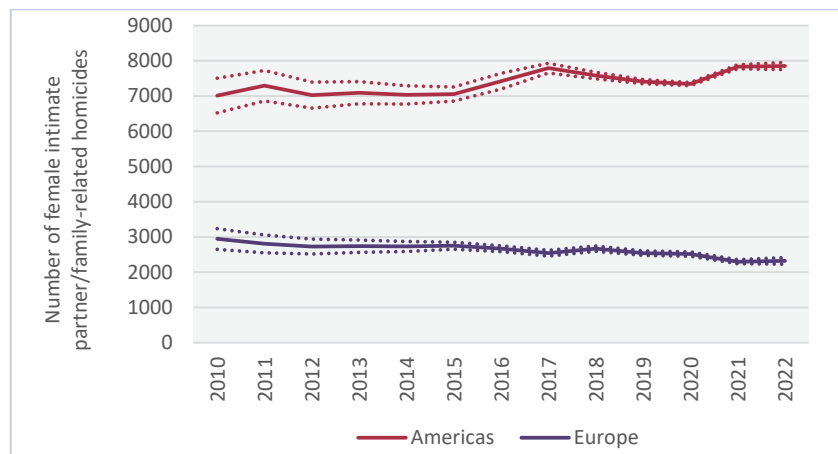
EXTENT OF FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE IN RATES

By accounting for differences between regions in terms of population size and growth, homicide rates are more suitable than absolute numbers for capturing women's risk of being killed by someone in their own family. In 2022, out of every 100,000 women and girls worldwide, approximately 1.2 were killed by their intimate partners or other family members.¹⁵ Regarding regional differences, the available data suggest that in Africa women and girls are at greatest risk of being killed by their intimate partners or other family members. In 2022, the female intimate partner/family-related homicide rate in Africa was estimated at 2.8 per 100,000 female population, compared with 1.5 in the Americas, 1.1 in Oceania, 0.8 in Asia and 0.6 in Europe.

TRENDS IN FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE

Despite improvements in the availability and comparability of homicide data over the past decade,¹⁶ significant data gaps remain, especially in countries in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. This means that Europe and the Americas are currently the only two world regions where data availability allows for estimation of over-time trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicides. Although the macro-level trends hide a significant amount of variability in sub-regional and national trends, the overall picture emerging is one of relative stability in the rate of yearly killings at the regional level (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Trends in the number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in the Americas and Europe (2010–2022)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

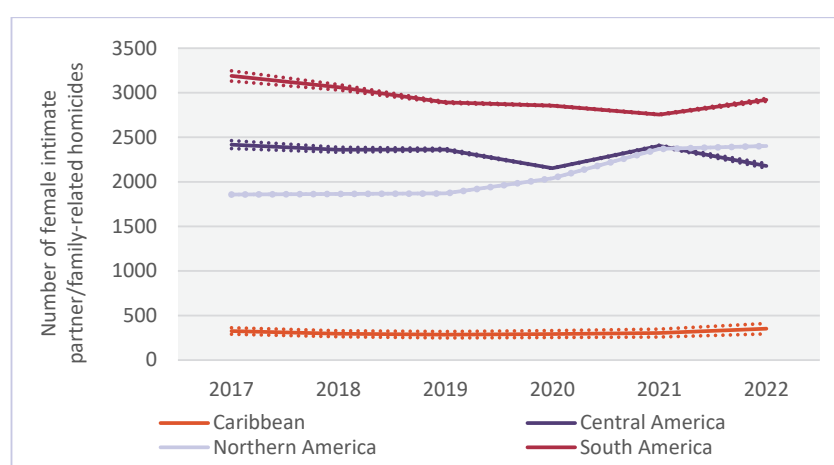
Note: The dotted lines represent ranges around the estimate and show the extent to which the regional estimate for a specific year relies on reported versus imputed country-level series of intimate partner/family-related homicide. The ranges do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted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

¹⁵ Due to improvements in data coverage and statistical modelling, the estimated 2022 global rate of 1.2 female intimate partner/family-related homicides per 100,000 women is not directly comparable to the 2021 rate of 1.1 rate published in the *Data Matters 5* and should not be interpreted as an increase in the risk of such killings at the global level between the end of 2021 and the end of 2022.

¹⁶ While 74 countries had at least one data point on female intimate partner/family-related homicide in the period 2009–2015, this increased to 99 countries in the period 2016–2022.

In the Americas, the most noteworthy development in recent years is the flat U-shaped trend observable since 2017, which suggests some reductions in the yearly number of gender-related killings of women and girls in the region until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by a deterioration of the situation thereafter. This regional trend can be to some extent explained by different sub-regional and national trends. Figure 3 shows the estimated yearly number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in the Northern, South, Central America, and the Caribbean sub-regions between 2017 and 2022. While Central and South America experienced a decline in yearly killings between 2017 and 2022 (by 10% and 8% respectively), Northern America witnessed a significant increase (by 29%),¹⁷ while the Caribbean recorded a more modest increase (by 8%). In both Northern America and the Caribbean, the increases in killings were mostly recorded since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

FIGURE 3: Trends in the number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in Northern, South, Central America, and the Caribbean (2017–2022)



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 versus imputed country-level series of intimate partner/family-related homicide. The ranges do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. For more information, see the methodological annex.

These sub-regional trends in the Americas are in turn to a large extent driven by national trends in a few populous countries as well as some smaller countries with relatively high homicide rates. In Northern America, the United States has recorded an increase in female intimate partner/family-related homicides in recent years, especially since 2020 – taking place in the context of an overall increase in homicidal violence in the country since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 6 in the annex).¹⁸ In South America, Brazil has witnessed a modest increase in femicides¹⁹ in recent years (Figure 6), while other countries in the region (for example, Argentina, Colombia and Peru) have recorded modest declines. In Central America, diverging national trends can explain the fluctuations at the sub-regional level since 2017. For example, Mexico witnessed an increase in femicides until 2021 with a subsequent trend reversal, which is taking place in the context of an overall increase in homicidal violence against both men and women until 2021, followed by a decline in 2022 (Figure 6). By contrast, some less populous countries in Central America with relatively high

¹⁷ The regional trend in Northern America is strongly influenced by the national trend in the United States, which has been affected by the transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in 2021. See footnote below.

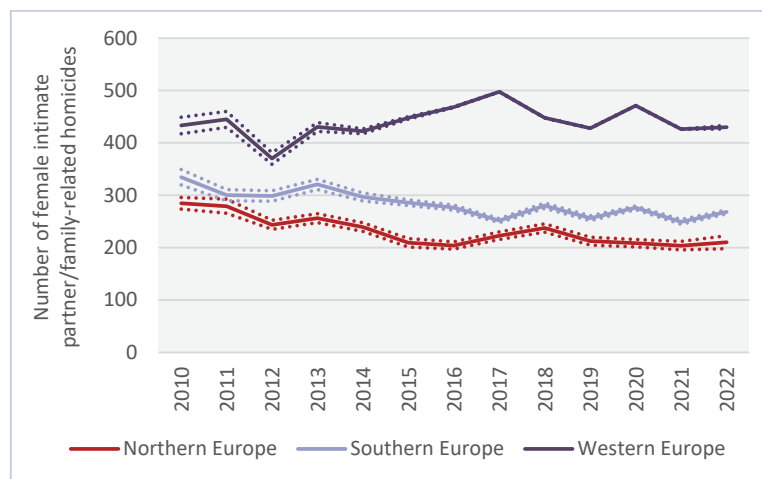
¹⁸ The national trend in the United States is also affected by the transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The 2020 figures used are based on the Summary Reporting System (SRS), while figures from 2021 onwards are based on NIBRS and SRS. For more information, see United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The transition to the national incident-based reporting system (NIBRS): a comparison of 2020 and 2021 NIBRS estimates", 2022.

¹⁹ For several countries, data on other types of gender-related killings such as 'femicides' or 'feminicides' based on domestic legislation are used given that reliable data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides are not available. For a detailed comparison of data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides and 'femicides/feminicides', see The Global Study on Homicide 2019, Booklet 5, p. 25

homicide rates, such as El Salvador and Honduras, have recorded reductions in femicides since 2015, again in the context of overall declines in homicidal violence (Figure 7).

In Europe, the average decline (by 21%) in the yearly number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides between 2010 and 2022 hides substantial difference in trends at the sub-regional level. While both Northern Europe and Southern Europe recorded average declines in female intimate partner/family-related homicides over the past decade (by 26% and 20% respectively), Western Europe saw little improvement in reducing the yearly number of killings, with significant year-on-year fluctuations around a relatively stable longer-term trend (Figure 4). In Eastern Europe, trend estimates are subject to more uncertainty due to less data availability in the region.²⁰ However, based on available data, it is estimated that the yearly rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicides declined moderately from 1.1 victims per 100,000 women in 2014 to 0.9 victims per 100,000 women in 2022 – still a significantly higher level of lethal violence compared with other European regions.

FIGURE 4: Trends in the number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe (2010–2022)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

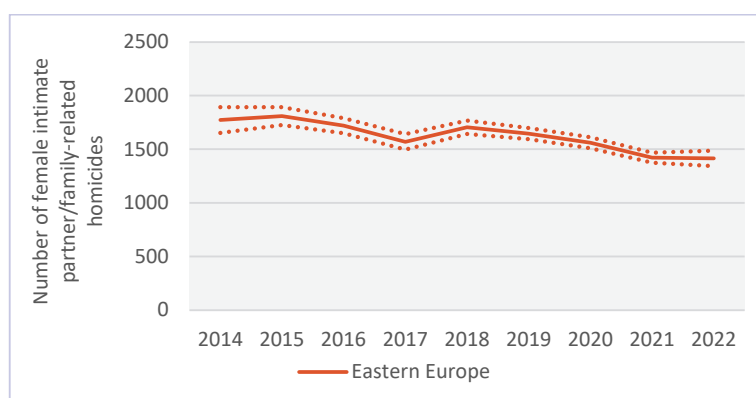
Note: The dotted lines represent ranges around the estimate and show the extent to which the regional estimate for a specific year relies on reported versus imputed country-level series of intimate partner/family-related homicide. The ranges do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted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

As in the Americas, the sub-regional trends in Europe are reflective of different national trends in the more populous countries. The overall average decline in Northern Europe, for example, is to a large extent driven by a slow downward trend in the United Kingdom, while the reduction in Southern Europe is driven by some modest decreases in yearly killings recorded in Spain and Italy between 2010 and 2019 (Figure 8). The yearly fluctuations around a relatively stable longer-term trend witnessed in Western Europe is, in turn, primarily driven by the yearly number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in Germany, which recorded little change in the longer-term, albeit with some noteworthy reductions in 2012 and 2019 as well as upticks in 2013 and 2020. Other countries in Western Europe such as France, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland have equally seen variability around relatively stable levels of gender-related killings in the private sphere.

In Eastern Europe, several countries including Belarus, Hungary and Romania recorded some reductions in the yearly number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides since 2015. However, the sub-regional trend for Eastern Europe is largely driven by available data from the Russian Federation, which are not indicative of a downward or upward trend in such killings, but rather show yearly fluctuations around stable levels (Figure 9).

²⁰ Homicide data for the Russian Federation for the year 2022 are not yet available as of November 2023.

FIGURE 4B: Trends in the number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in Eastern Europe (2014–2022)



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 versus imputed country-level series of intimate partner/family-related homicide. The ranges do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. For more information, see the methodological annex.

ITALY'S EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS

*Contribution by Maria Giuseppina Muratore and Franco Turetta
(Italian National Institute of Statistics)*

The Gender Dimension of Homicide

Italy's homicidal violence exhibits a clear gender dimension, similar to what can be observed in other countries.

Of all female homicides in 2021, 119 in total, 84% took place within the domestic sphere, while 21% of all male homicides, 184 in total, were committed in the home.

Approximately 59% of all female homicide victims in 2021 lost their lives at the hands of their intimate partners. Moreover, around 25% of female homicide victims were killed by another relative, 5% by an acquaintance and 11% by a stranger, with no identified perpetrator in the remaining cases.

The majority of juveniles (those under the age of 18 years) are killed by intimate partners and family members. Among boys, the percentage of individuals killed within the family is three times higher than the all-male average standing at about 55% compared to 21%. For girls this percentage is 75%, which is lower than the overall female total (84%).

Determining a motive for the killing is not always possible, and this was the case in 12% of incidents in 2021. The motives remained undetermined for a larger share of male homicides (17%) a proportion notably higher than that for female homicides (3%). This discrepancy is, in part, attributed to the prevalence of female homicides occurring within familial contexts, thereby simplifying the process of motive determination.

Measuring Femicide

Within the "Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls," femicides, denoting gender-related female homicides, are defined as those resulting from the victim being a woman.

In the Italian context, not all the "data blocks" specified in the framework are currently available. Nevertheless, collaborative efforts with the Ministry of the Interior are underway, and the availability of

this data is expected in the near future. The *Law n°53 of May 2022 (Provisions on the statistical measurement of violence against women)*, requires the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and Ministries of Health, Justice, and Interior to produce and provide data on gender-based violence. Additionally, a dedicated inter-ministerial panel with the responsibility of data collection and definitions is to be established.

However, from the currently available information concerning the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, as well as the motive behind the murders, it is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions about the extent of femicide in Italy. Out of the 119 women killed intentionally in 2021, 70 women were killed by their partner or former partner; 30 women were killed by another relative; four were killed by acquaintances in the emotional or relational sphere (as determined by the police investigator). This means that at least 104 female homicides, equivalent to 87.4% of all female homicides in 2021, can be classified as gender-related killings (femicides), solely based on the characteristics of the victim-perpetrator relationship.

The remaining 15 female victims included two women over the age of 65 robbed by a stranger, two others were killed by acquaintances due to neighbourhood problems or other reasons. The remaining 11 were killed by unknown persons for various reasons. In these 15 cases, a conclusive determination regarding whether the killings were gender-related would necessitate more detailed information.

The Criminal Justice Response to Femicide

In 2021, the Italian Senate Commission on Femicide reviewed the files on criminal proceedings from all public prosecutors' offices and courts/courts of appeal concerning voluntary murders of women that occurred in the period 2017-2018.²¹ Among the potential 211 femicides during this period, 192 cases (with 196 victims) had an indicted perpetrator for homicide, while in 19 cases the defendant was acquitted by final judgment.

In 16 cases, the ground for acquittal related to mental health; in two cases the defendants were adjudicated as not having committed the act, while in one case the reason could not be established. Among the strategies employed by the defendants, the plea to acknowledge their mental incapacity was frequently used (59%), yet only in three out of ten cases was incapacity fully or partially acknowledged.

The Commission revealed noteworthy findings and data regarding the history of violence endured by many femicide victims. Just 15% of the women had reported or filed a case against the perpetrator for violence or other crimes previously. Although this percentage is relatively low in comparison to the overall number of victims, those who did file a complaint did so on multiple occasions (57%), and in 35% of cases, three or more complaints were made.

Furthermore, on average, 2.4 years elapsed between the first complaint and the occurrence of femicide. However, in half of the cases the murder occurred less than a year after the initial complaint (with a median of 324 days). Without exception, the perpetrators were all men. One in five had a criminal record at the time of the murder, and more than a quarter were grappling with addiction to alcohol, drugs, psychotropic drugs or other substance.

Limited data availability means that the estimation of over-time trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicides is not possible in the other world regions, namely in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. However, evidence from several populous Asian and African countries with available trend data suggest that there have been some reductions in gender-related killings of women and girls over the past decade, albeit with some recent trend reversals. For example, in India, violent deaths related to dowry payments, accusations of witchcraft and other gender-related factors have been slowly declining over the past decade, with the caveat that figures for the year 2022 are not yet available (Figure 10). A similar trend can be observed in neighbouring Pakistan, which recorded some long-term reductions in female victims of "honour crimes" since 2011, albeit with a modest trend reversal since 2018 (Figure 11). In South Africa, estimates of female intimate partner killings from three national studies across 18 years (1999, 2009, and 2017), suggest that the female intimate partner homicide rate was halved over this time period.²² While estimates of female killings in the domestic sphere are not available after 2017, in recent years, the rate of female homicide in South

²¹ The report is available at this link: <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/366054.pdf>

²² Abrahams, N. et. al., *Decrease in Femicide in South Africa: Three National Studies Across 18 Years*. Research brief, South African Medical Research Council (2022).

Africa has increased dramatically, from 9.0 victims per 100,000 women at the end of 2019 to 12.7 victims per 100,000 women at the end of 2022.²³

In several African and Asian countries with available time series data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides (for example in Afghanistan, Algeria, Morocco, and Uganda), the data are not indicative of clear trends. Finally, although the link between the total number of female victims and the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides is not always direct,²⁴ trend data on the total number of female homicide victims (both inside and outside the home) from several populous Asian countries, including the Philippines, Türkiye and Japan, show reductions since 2010. Taken together, the available trend data therefore suggest that the femicide risk for women and girls might be decreasing, particularly in Asia.

In Oceania, Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries with reliable trend data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides. Australia has seen some reductions in the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in recent years, while New Zealand has experienced an increase in killings.²⁵ Large data gaps remain for the rest of Oceania, with no recent sex-disaggregated homicide data available for the more populous Pacific nations of Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

PATTERNS OF DOMESTIC HOMICIDE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING LOCKDOWN: INTERRUPTED TIME-SERIES ANALYSIS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Contribution by Valeria Abreu Minero (University of Derby) and Amy Nivette (Utrecht University)

Official statistics on domestic homicide in England and Wales in the year ending March 2021 suggest that numbers have remained largely the same over the last decade.²⁶ However, recent research suggests that aggregate stability in homicide trends may be masking changes across different types of victimization.²⁷ A closer look at the data could reveal insights about victim-offender relationships and risk factors to inform more effective responses. This contribution looks at monthly data using interrupted time series (ITS) analysis focusing on the three Covid-19 national lockdowns in England and Wales (see table), to examine how these measures may have affected the composition of victims of female domestic homicide (DH) across different types of victim-offender relationship.

First lockdown	26 th March – 15 th June 2020
Second lockdown	5 th November – 2 nd December 2020
Third lockdown	6 th January – 12 th April 2021

Key Findings

As in other contexts, the DH incidents in the data show a clear gender dimension (71% of the perpetrators are men and 67% of the victims are women). The start of the first lockdown in March 2020 and final lifting of restrictions in April 2021, were the months which saw the highest counts in female (current and former) partner homicides across the entire lockdown period (i.e., March 2020 to April 2021); 11 and 10

²³ South African Police Service. Crime Statistics, available at: <https://www.saps.gov.za/services/crimestats.php>

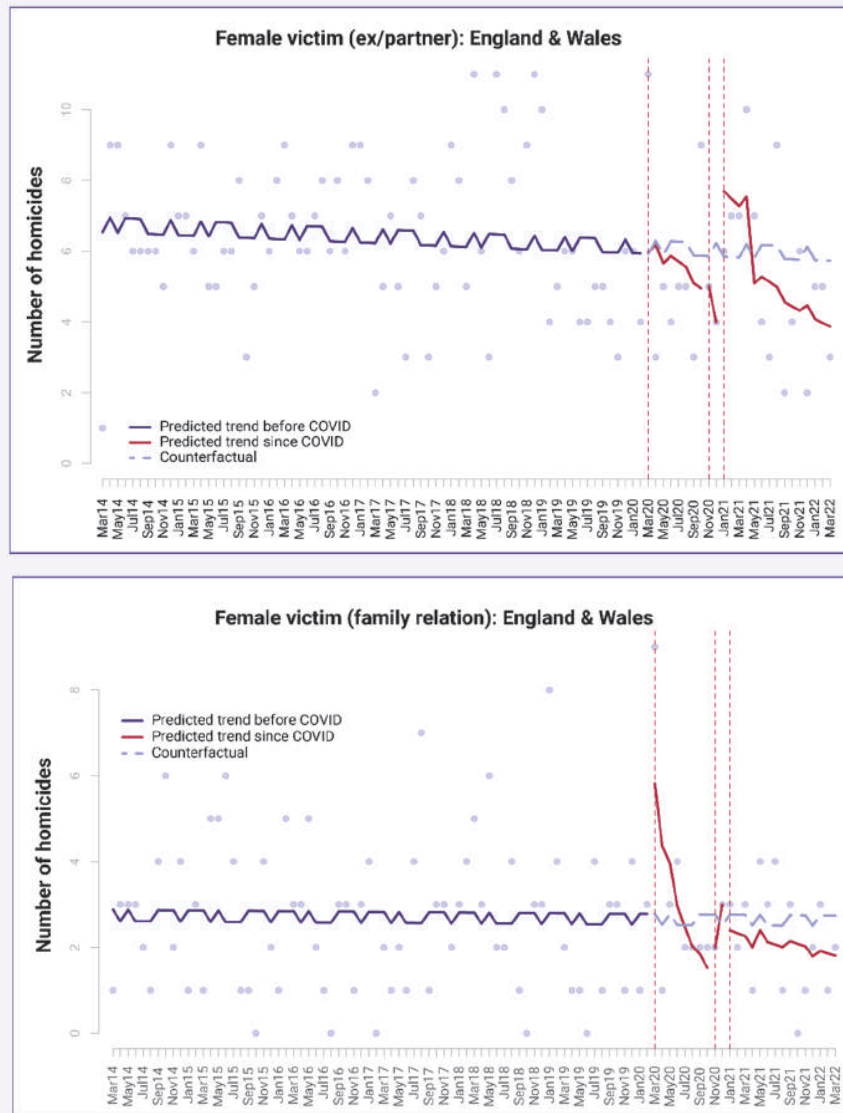
²⁴ See *Data Matters 3* for a discussion of trends in non-intimate partner/family-related female homicides and how they related to trends in intimate partner/family-related female homicides.

²⁵ The Australian national trend in female intimate partner/family-related homicides to a large extent determines the overall trend in Oceania. This is because Australia is by far the most populous country in the region, accounting for around 60% of the regional population.

²⁶ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) Homicide in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2022. ONS.

²⁷ Hoeger, K., Bates, L., Perry, P., Nguyen Phan, T. T., & Whitaker, A. (2022). Domestic Homicide Project Spotlight Briefing# 2 Older Victims.

cases respectively (see Figure below).²⁸ Estrangement or post-separation is known to result in heightened risk of intimate partner homicide (IPH).²⁹ It is possible that more victims attempted to separate from abusive partners at these two key points in time. This is supported to some extent in by research reporting slightly elevated numbers of IPH cases following lifting of the first lockdown restrictions.³⁰



Analysis of female victims killed by other family members also showed an increase at the start of the first lockdown and slightly lower than pre-Covid levels during the second and third lockdowns and the final post-lockdown period (i.e., May 2021 to March 2022), with minor increases during December 2020 and March 2021. The spike at the start of the first lockdown in March 2020 reflects the highest monthly

²⁸ With the exception of a small significant effect of the third lockdown on current intimate partner homicide, the changes were not found to be statistically significant using an interrupted time series design. However, the counts for homicide across former partner and other family (i.e., son or daughter and parent) victim categories in a given month are low. This, combined with short lockdown periods, results in less precision and potentially unstable coefficients.

²⁹ Dobash, R.E., & Dobash, R.P. (2016) Contacts with the Police and Other Agencies Across the Life-Course of Men Who Murder an Intimate Woman Partner. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 10(4): 408-415

³⁰ Bates, L., Hoeger, K., Stoneman, M. J., & Whitaker, A. (2021). Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides During the Covid-19 Pandemic.

count for female homicide by other family members across all lockdown periods (i.e., March 2020 to April 2021); accounting for nine deaths in eight incidents, with more than half of these (55%) occurring within the first week of lockdown. The type of homicide was most commonly parent homicide (55%), followed by child homicide (44%). The available data also indicate that none of the cases had a prior history of previous domestic violence against the suspect and/or victim. The suspect attempted suicide in 50% of the cases, compared to an average of 14% of female homicides by other family members in the same month over the preceding six-year period (2014-2019) – a substantial difference. It is possible that the situational pressures from the first national lockdown may have increased anxiety and affected the mental wellbeing of the suspects. In-depth Domestic Homicide Reviews will allow for a better understanding of the context and circumstances of each of these homicides.

Finally, analyses to explore whether the lockdowns in England and Wales increased the “recording lag” (i.e., time between the commission of a homicide and the recording of the incident by the police) for female homicides were conducted. To achieve an even comparison, the mean difference in the number of days was calculated, while restricting the timeframes to one year for both pre- (March 2019 to March 2020), during (March 2020 to April 2021), and post- (April 2021 to March 2022) Covid-19 periods. While the mean recording lag doubles between the pre-Covid-19 and the Covid-19 period, this number is skewed substantially by a small number of outlier cases with a large lag between incident and recording dates during the Covid-19 period. Furthermore, the *median* difference in the recording lag – which is less affected by outliers – was not found to be significantly different between the periods.³¹ The vast majority of cases in all three periods (75%) were recorded within 2-3 days of the incident.

Methodology

The analysis is based on 8.3 years of homicide records extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index on all homicide victims from 1 January 2014, to 31 March 2022. Data extracted from the Homicide Index contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. The available data allow for a comprehensive analysis of the periods before and after the onset of the first lockdown (i.e., pre- and post-March 2020); before and after the onset of the second lockdown (i.e., pre- and post- November 2020); and before and after the onset of the third lockdown (i.e., pre- and post-January 2021). The dataset includes victim data on 4,784 homicides, including 1,213 (25%) domestic homicides. The analysis uses data relating to the date on which the homicide occurred, rather than the date on which the homicide was recorded and includes victims younger than 16 years of age. Among all DH, the victim-perpetrator relationship is classified into five categories: son/daughter (18%), parent (15%), partner (45%), ex-partner (10%) and other family (11%). To analyse the immediate effect of each Covid lockdown on homicide, but also the mid-term changes in homicide after each lockdown, an interrupted time series (ITS) design is used. The ITS design evaluates the change in the outcome in the time-period following an ‘interruption’ or intervention and assumes that without the interruption there would be no change in trends. The outcomes measured in the analysis are the number of homicide events per month. Poisson generalized linear models are used to assess the average changes in homicides for each lockdown and linear trends within each lockdown period. A statistically significant lockdown parameter indicates that the change after the lockdown was on average significantly different compared to the pre-lockdown period. A statistically significant time trend indicates that the number of homicides increased or decreased following the lockdown until the following lockdown or until end of the time series. To illustrate the changes in homicide trends, pre-COVID-19 trends in homicide are used to predict the expected trend that one would have observed if the lockdowns had not taken place.

Implications

- Contrary to concerns about a possible rise,³² female domestic homicides do not appear to have increased substantially during the thirteen-month period encompassing the three national lockdowns in England and Wales. This stability in trends contrasts with the sharp decreases seen in non-family homicide (outside the home) across the same period,³³ and confirms that female domestic homicide in England and Wales is a persisting problem.

³¹ Differences in the *median* lag between time periods were compared using Mood’s median test. The results showed that the differences in the median lag between the time periods were not statistically significant ($X^2=5.12$, $p=.07$).

³² Grierson, J. (2020, April 15). Domestic abuse killings ‘more than double’ amid Covid-19 lockdown. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-covid-19-lockdown>

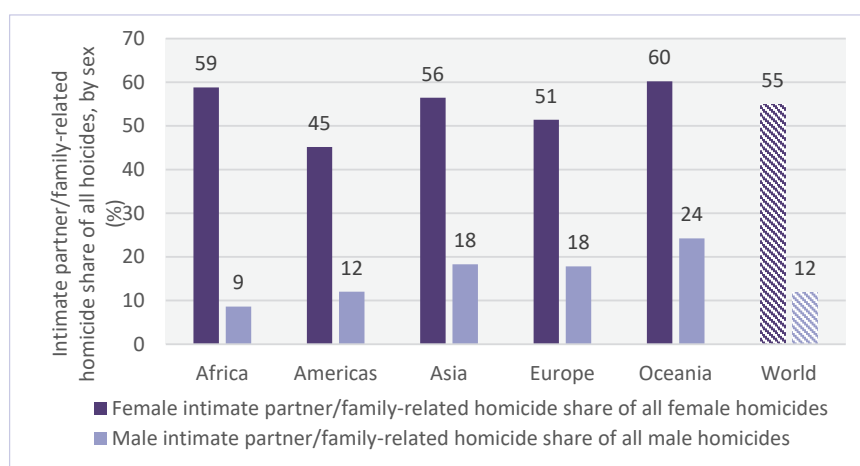
³³ Abreu Minero, V., & Nivette, A. (2023). Changing Patterns of Domestic Homicide During Lockdown: Interrupted Time-Series Analysis in England and Wales. *Homicide Studies*, 10887679231190032.

- The findings suggest that reporting the average change in domestic homicide during lockdown can be misleading when designing a policy response. Monthly analyses highlighted some differences by victim type that may inform learning about possible links between Covid-related pressures and heightened homicide risk for specific groups across different periods.

HOMICIDES IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE HAVE A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN

As of 2022, the overwhelming majority of homicides worldwide are committed against men and boys (80%), while women and girls account for a much smaller share of all homicide victims (20%). However, women and girls are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence in the private sphere (perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members), while men and boys are more at risk of homicidal violence in the public sphere. Out of all homicide victims killed by intimate partners or other family members in 2022, approximately 53% were women and girls.

FIGURE 5: Share of intimate partner/family-related homicides among all female and male homicides, by region (2022)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Out of all female homicide victims in 2022, around 55% were killed by intimate partners or other family members, indicating clearly that the most dangerous place for women and girls is their home. Men and boys are instead primarily at risk of being killed by someone outside their family. Out of all male homicide victims in 2022, around 12% were killed by intimate partners or other family members.

Some regional differences are observable in relation to the female and male burden of homicidal violence in the private sphere. Figure 5 suggests that in regions with lower levels of intentional homicide (both inside and outside the home) such as Europe and Asia, the share of male homicides related to violence in the home is larger (at 18%) than in regions with very high levels of homicidal violence such as Africa, where the estimated share drops below 10%.

Current and former intimate partners are by far the most likely perpetrators of lethal violence against women and girls. Based on available data from 78 countries and territories from all world regions,³⁴ female homicides perpetrated by current or former intimate partners account for an average of 63%

³⁴ Data on female homicides perpetrated exclusively by intimate partners are available from 78 countries across all regions for at least one year in the period 2015–2022.

of all female intimate partner/family-related killings.³⁵ Women and girls also bear the overwhelming burden of all killings perpetrated by intimate partners, accounting on average for 66% of all victims of intimate partner homicide in the 78 countries with data.³⁶

PREVENTING GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Despite efforts made by countries to prevent gender-related killings of women and girls, such killings remain at unacceptable levels. They are very often the culmination of repeated episodes of gender-based violence,³⁷ which means they are preventable through timely and effective interventions. Over the past decades, initiatives aimed at addressing these crimes have emerged, ranging from the criminalization of femicide/feminicide as specific offences in some countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, to the implementation of improved risk assessments and protection measures, among others.³⁸ Several countries have established femicide observatories, often as a result of civil society mobilization and advocacy,³⁹ and femicide observatories or “femicide watch” bodies have also been promoted by international human rights mechanisms, such as the CEDAW Committee⁴⁰ and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.⁴¹

While efforts are being enhanced to improve data collection and analysis, including the adoption of the *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)* by the UN Statistical Commission,⁴² national data collection systems need to be strengthened to provide a more comprehensive picture, especially on killings by unknown perpetrators. Efforts are needed to improve data to better understand the magnitude, nature and consequences of gender-related killings of women at high risk, such as women in public life, including women in political life, women human rights defenders and journalists. Given the current global context, it is also necessary to improve data systems to assess the impacts of conflict, environmental and humanitarian crises on gender-based violence broadly and gender-related killings of women and girls specifically, in order to adopt relevant prevention and response strategies.

Increased efforts are also needed in different areas such as primary prevention addressing social norms at the individual, community as well as institutional levels; social, health and, criminal justice responses, victim support and assistance to enable an evidence-based comprehensive response that will help prevent and eradicate gender-related killings of women and girls.⁴³

One innovative practice with the potential to enhance necessary reforms are in-depth multi-stakeholder reviews of gender-related killings of women and girls. Several countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have established multi-sectoral committees that conduct regular in-depth reviews of deaths or homicides related to domestic violence, often with the involvement and participation of families and social

³⁵ Average weighted by the number of female intimate partner/family-related killings in each of the 78 countries.

³⁶ Average weighted by the number of intimate partner killings (male and female victims) in each of the 78 countries.

³⁷ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019, booklet on gender-related killing of women and girls*.

³⁸ See Dawson and Mobayed Vega (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide* (2023).

³⁹ See “Countries across Europe take first steps to address femicide” (4 May, 2023), <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/stories/news-/2023/05/countries-across-europe-take-first-steps-to-address-femicide>

⁴⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (2017), General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on Gender-based violence against women. CEDAW/C/GC/35.

⁴¹ A/71/398.

⁴² UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)* (Vienna, 2021).

⁴³ See UN recommendations for action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93).

networks of victims, with the aim of improving institutional responses and preventing future killings (see box below).⁴⁴

Most femicide observatories focus on data collection; however, some also conduct case reviews, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has recommended that the mandate of femicide watch panels or observatories on violence against women should include systematic analyses of all cases of femicide, including court cases, with the aim of determining gaps in the response system to such violence, and of establishing risk factors to prevent such violence in the first place.⁴⁵

PREVENTING DOMESTIC KILLINGS OF WOMEN IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Contribution by Pauline Gulliver (Family Violence Death Review Committee at the Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand)

Between 2009 and 2020, there were 320 family violence-related killings in Aotearoa New Zealand. Women and girls accounted for 178 (56%): 43 were child abuse and neglect deaths, 112 intimate partner violence deaths and 23 other family violence-related deaths.

The Family Violence Death Review Committee, a statutory committee established under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, reviews fatalities that result from violence between intimate partners, parents against their children or other familial relationships. In-depth reviews are used to understand the context of the relationship, as well as help-seeking behaviour and agency responses to help-seeking in the lead-up to the death. These reviews aim to identify potential enhancements in the system's responsiveness to individuals experiencing violence and those perpetrating it. Due to resource constraints only between two and four in-depth reviews can be conducted per year. The committee takes a strategic approach to conducting in-depth reviews, focusing on those deaths from which it is possible to learn more about system responsiveness.⁴⁶

The committee reviews case notes and clinical records for all contacts between government and non-government agencies and the deceased, the offender and (where relevant) family or *whānau*⁴⁷ members. The committee also engages with surviving family, *whānau* or friends to understand their views on opportunities for a different outcome. Participation in the reviews is voluntary for survivors and supported by non-government organizations or counselling services to ensure the safety of survivors. The Committee adopts a life-course approach to in-depth reviews of fatal incidents, recognizing the significance of past support experiences in current patterns of engagement with assisting agencies or organizations. It emphasizes that responses characterized by racism, stigma or punishment diminish the likelihood of effective engagement.

Recommendations from the Committee have evolved from how individual agencies (for example, police) or components of the system (judiciary) responded to individuals. The Committee now seeks to understand the journey of a family or *whānau* affected by a family violence death. There has been a focus on the wider systemic processes or structures that reinforce violence experience or entrap women in relationships where violence is perpetrated. Like many colonized societies, the impact of the act of colonization in Aotearoa New Zealand persists to this day and is enacted through institutional responses to violence.

The Committee's findings indicate that individuals at the greatest vulnerability, notably Māori, women, children and people with disabilities, are often ascribed responsibility for their circumstances. This attribution is evident in case notes, through the interactions with case workers and the insufficient responsiveness of agencies, reflecting a perception that these individuals are somehow less deserving of care. In deciding what information to collect about families, government agencies may be driven more

⁴⁴ See UNODC, Background paper on Femicide Review Committees (Vienna, 2023) https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_32/CRPs/ECN152023_CRP6_e.pdf

⁴⁵ A/71/398, para. 84(f).

⁴⁶ For example, the Committee has recently taken a specific focus on family violence deaths where there have been disability or chronic health issues within the family, violence between adults with no intimate relationship (for example, between siblings or by adult children against their parents), and murder-suicide events.

⁴⁷ Extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people - the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society. In the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties.

by their own requirements than those of the victim, offender or their family, and in focusing on whether an offence has occurred may neglect other warning signs. This creates misalignments and missed opportunities to prevent domestic killings.

As a counterbalance to this behaviour, the Committee has recommended that government agencies work towards a duty to care, drawing on the approaches of Kaupapa Māori organizations. These approaches work towards well-being rather than the absence of symptoms (violence). Well-being includes having the ability to engage with community, culture and family life, having access to education, employment, safety (freedom from violence), material and cultural resources. A well-being approach also focuses on the long-term impacts of violence experience. This creates a space for individuals and families to potentially re-engage during periods of increased need, drawing on the trusted relationships that have developed. This approach encompasses:

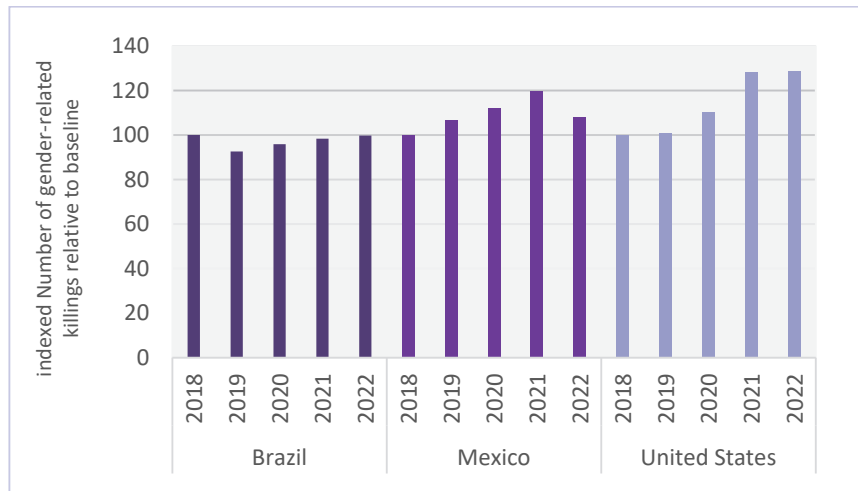
1. The need for a depth of knowledge and expertise: Organizations provide training and support to general practitioners, lawyers, police, mental health workers, midwives and teachers who have the most contact with women and children but who are recognized as having the least awareness of coercive control. "They're looking for the hit or the punch or the bruise, with no idea about entrapment".
2. A focus on the whole family or whānau: There is an acknowledgement that family relationships can and will continue to exist even where an intimate relationship may cease. Women are not expected to remain with violent partners, but in using this approach, all people in the family environment are provided with a response to avoid creating silent victims or, indeed, future offenders. For example, where women have been isolated from their family, there is a need to re-establish those links where they are safe. Concurrently working alongside the family helps to determine the physical and emotional resources required to support vulnerable women and children, and enables more effective, holistic support to be provided.
3. Challenging the status quo: Shifting the system to be responsive to families and whānau instead of contractual obligations. "When you put whānau at the centre of your system and say everything we do has to add value from their perspective, that means that your system is oriented to a whānau worldview; oriented to responding to their need, not the government's need or a contract need...What are the things that people don't get help with currently...The things that people struggle to get early intervention support with, that could be the drivers of the more serious problems."

There is currently no accountability mechanism for the recommendations issued by the Committee. Consequently, follow-up on these recommendations requires on-going engagement with the agencies concerned and across sectors. Engaging in a duty to care requires that agencies and organizations allow families, whānau and victims of violence to be experts in their own story, responding to the issues that they prioritize and developing a relationship of trust. This requires time and flexibility. While apparently counterintuitive, a willingness of victims and offenders to engage and re-engage with services is evidence of the success of a duty to care. It indicates that services are trusted and can be called upon in times of exacerbated need.

Reference document: New Zealand Government. A duty to care. Seventh report, June 2022. Available at: <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-work/Mortality-review-committee/FVDRC/Publications-resources/Seventh-report-transcripts/FVDRC-seventh-report-web.pdf>

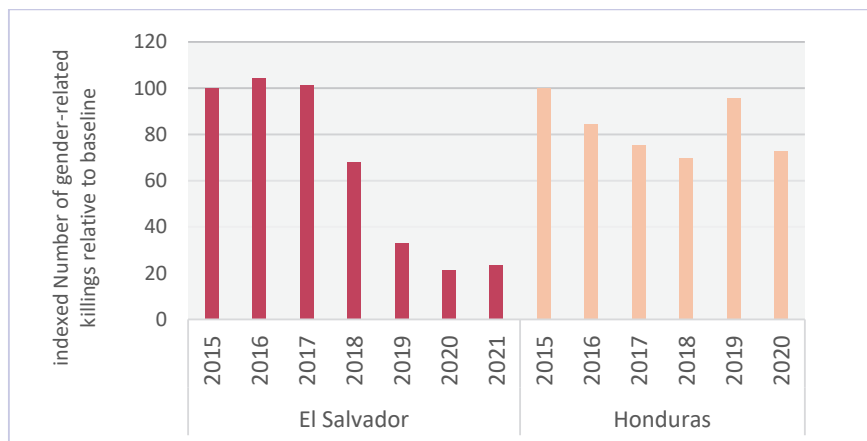
STATISTICAL ANNEX

FIGURE 6: Country-level trends in gender-related killings of women and girls in selected countries of the Americas (2018-2022)



Note: Available data for the United States refer to female intimate partner/family-related homicides as reported to UNODC via the UN Crime Trends Survey. Available data for Brazil and Mexico refer to "femicide" as defined in respective national legislation. For Mexico, see Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, Gobierno de México (<https://www.gob.mx/sesnspp/acciones-y-programas/datos-abiertos-de-incidencia-delictiva>). For Brazil, see Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (available at <https://forumseguranca.org.br/anuario-brasileiro-seguranca-publica/>). The selection of the specific criminal offence to conduct investigation and/or prosecution in cases when a woman is intentionally killed is subject to determination by competent authorities and this can affect comparability and even completeness of relevant data (see UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2019).

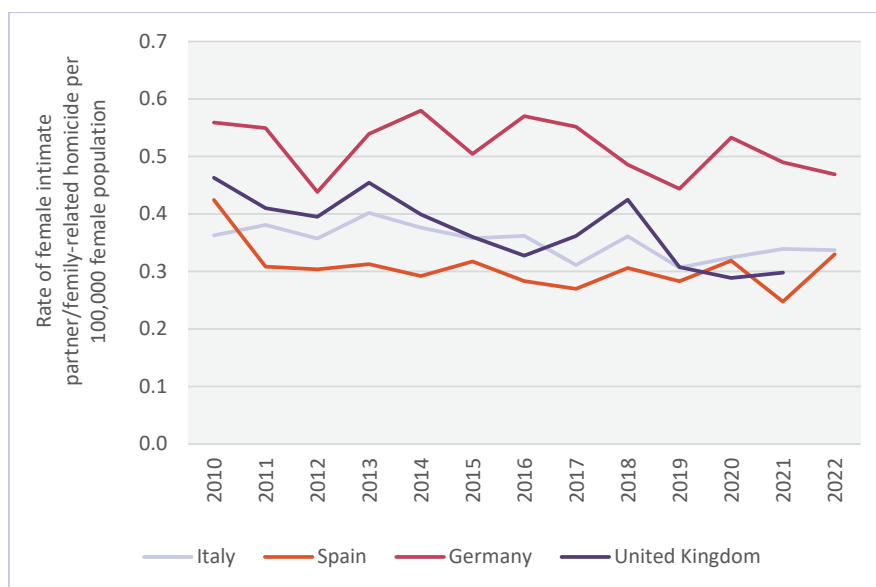
FIGURE 7: Country-level trends in gender-related killings of women and girls in selected countries of the Americas (2015 - most recent year available)



Note: Available data for El Salvador and Honduras refer to "femicide" as defined in respective national legislation. For El Salvador, see Ministerio de Justicia y Seguridad Pública. For Honduras, see Instituto Universitario en Democracia, Paz y Seguridad (IUDPAS) - Observatorio de Muertes Violentas de Mujeres y Femicidios. The selection of the specific criminal offence to conduct investigation and/or prosecution in cases when a woman is intentionally killed is subject to determination by competent authorities and this can affect comparability and even completeness of relevant data (see UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2019).

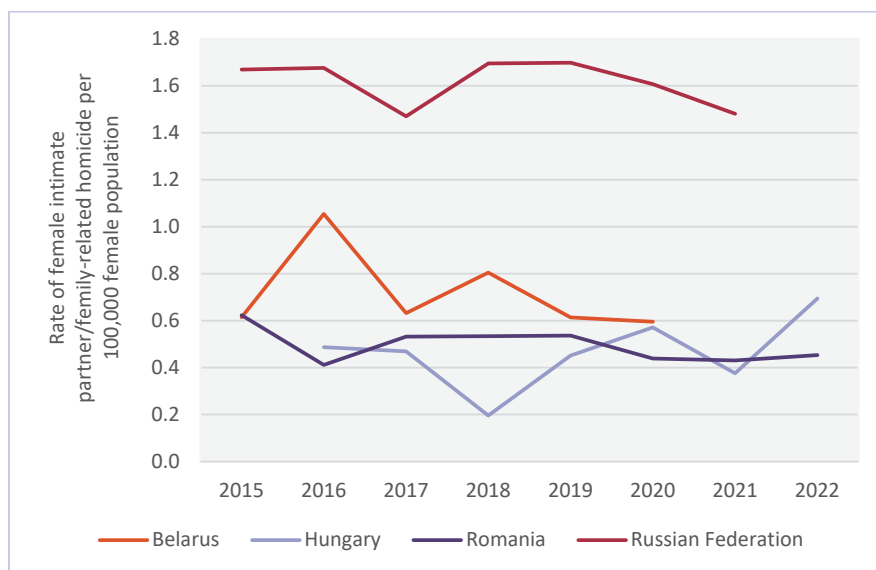
FIGURE 8: Trend in the rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population in Italy, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom (2010-2022)

Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset. Note: Rates for the United Kingdom for the period 2010-2012 do not include data from Northern Ireland.

FIGURE 9: Trend in the rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population in Belarus, Hungary, Romania and the Russian Federation (2014 – most recent year available)



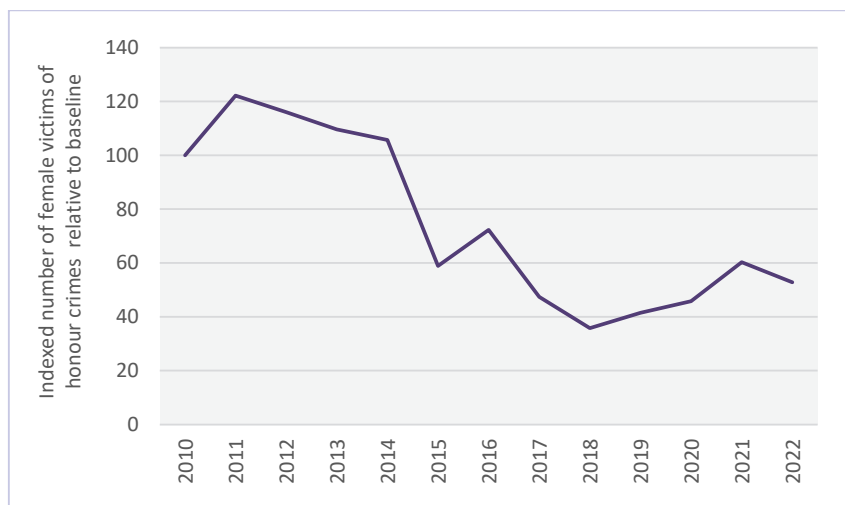
Source: UNODC Homicide dataset

FIGURE 10: Number of gender-related violent deaths in India (2016-2021)



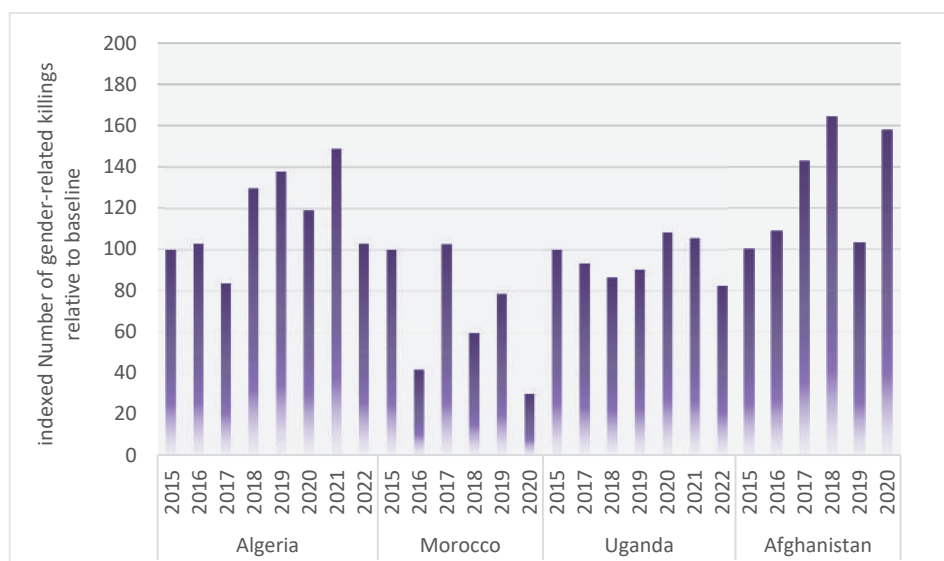
Source: National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, India. Data for the year 2022 are not yet available.

FIGURE 11: Female victims of honour crimes in Pakistan (2010 -2022)



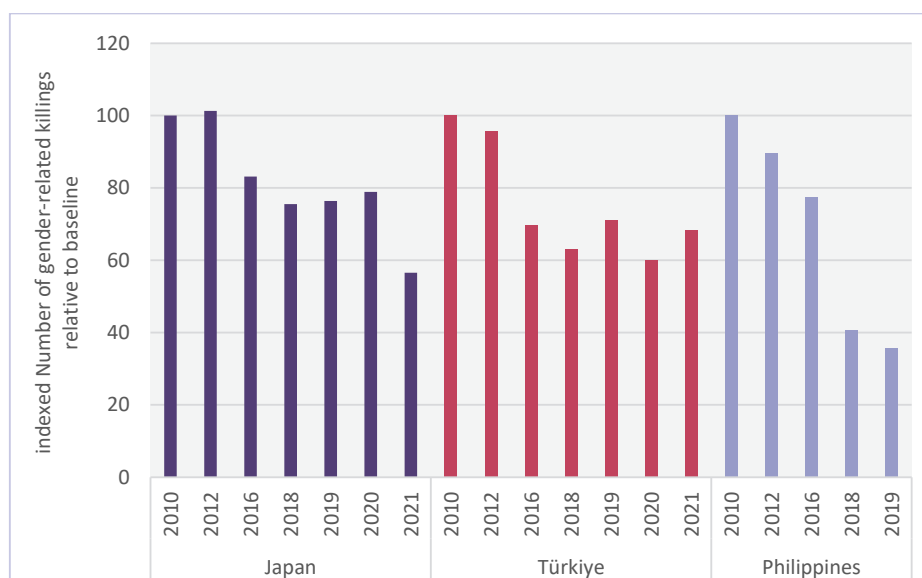
Source: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Data are based on cases reported in the news.

FIGURE 12: Country-level trends in gender-related killings of women and girls in selected countries in Africa and Asia (2015 – most recent year available)



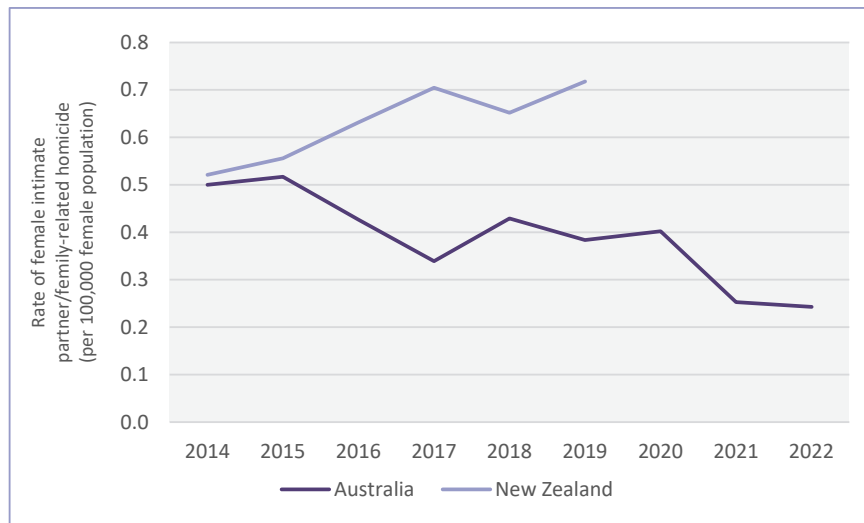
Note: Available data for Algeria and Morocco refer to female intimate partner/family-related homicides and are based on the UN Crime Trends Survey. Available data for Uganda refer to female murders as a result of domestic violence based on the Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Reports. Available data for refer to female murder victims killed in the context of violence against women and girls based on the Afghanistan NSIA Statistical Yearbooks.

FIGURE 13: Country-level trends in female homicide victims in Japan, Türkiye and the Philippines (2010 – most recent year available)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset

FIGURE 14: Trend in the rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population in Australia and New Zealand (2014 – most recent year available)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset

METHODOLOGICAL ANNEX

Data

Data sources

The analysis presented in this brief and the estimates produced at global and regional level are based on data available for 105 countries or territories. For these countries or territories, at least one data point on intentional homicides of female victims perpetrated by their intimate partner or other family members was available for the period 2010-2022. 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).⁴⁸ The UN-CTS, conducted in collaboration with Eurostat in European Union Member States and Candidates for Accession as well as European Free Trade Association countries, and supported by the Organization of American States in their member countries, collects administrative data on the total number of homicide victims as well as relevant disaggregations of homicide victims by sex and age, by killing mechanism (firearms, sharp objects and others) and by perpetrator/context of the crime (family/intimate partner, organized crime, gang, robbery, other, unknown context). In most cases, the homicide data are sourced from Member States' criminal justice systems, however, in a few cases the data are sourced from the public health system.⁴⁹

Where needed and applicable, UN-CTS homicide data were supplemented with external data sources, mostly using official sources from Member States or UNODC's global initiative to improve knowledge of the impact of COVID-19 on crime.⁵⁰ Population data used to calculate sex-disaggregated homicide rates (per 100,000 population) were sourced from the United Nations 2022 Revision of World Population Prospects.⁵¹

Data validation

All homicide data collected through the UN-CTS as well as external data sources were 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),⁵² 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 the male and female homicides add up to the reported total, or that the reported number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides does not exceed the reported number of female homicides).⁵³

Data coverage

Internationally comparable data on female homicides and female intimate partner/family-related homicides 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. The table below provides an overview of data coverage of these two indicators in the five world regions.

⁴⁸ National homicide data are available at: <https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-intentional-homicide-victims>

⁴⁹ See Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019 for more information.

⁵⁰ More information available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/coronavirus.html>

⁵¹ Available at: <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

⁵² Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/iccs.html>

⁵³ For a detailed description of the validation procedure applied to the homicide data, see Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019.

TABLE 1: Data coverage for female homicides and female intimate partner/family-related homicides by region (2010-2022)

Region	Number of countries/ territories in region	with available data for at least 1 year in the period 2010-22		with available data for at least 3 years in the period 2010-22	
		Female homicide	Female intimate partner/family- related homicide ⁵⁴	Female homicide	Female intimate partner/fa mily-related homicide
Africa	58	19	9	15	5
Americas	54	43	34	40	31
Asia	52	36	17	34	11
Europe	52	47	42	44	35
Oceania	23	8	3	5	2
World	239	153	105	138	84

Source: UNODC homicide dataset

Methods

The methods used for estimating the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides at the global and regional level aim to make the best possible use of available data. For each regional aggregate, the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides should correspond to the sum of all national data of such killings in the region, in each year. However, for many countries, data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides are not available, or data are available only 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 first, the values in the total homicide series are imputed if missing, second, the total homicide series is used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female homicide series,⁵⁵ and third, the female homicide series is then used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female intimate partner/family-related 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).

⁵⁴ In 21 countries (11 in the Americas, 2 in Africa, 4 in Asia, and 4 in Europe) 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-related 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-related homicides and 'femicides/feminicides', see The Global Study on Homicide 2019, Booklet 5, p. 25.

⁵⁵ Coverage for female homicide is generally better compared to female intimate partner/family-related homicide.

- Imputation of the female intimate partner/family-related homicide series is performed on the country-level *ratio* of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides (where data on both indicators are available).⁵⁶

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,⁵⁷ 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-related 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.⁵⁸

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:

- 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).⁵⁹
- Regional female homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional ratios of female homicides over total homicides with the total homicides of the respective region.
- Regional totals of female intimate partner/family-related homicide are calculated for each year by applying the regional ratios of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over 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-related homicides.

Computation of uncertainty intervals

As explained above, global and regional estimates of female intimate partner/family-related 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

⁵⁶ Validation checks ensure that this ratio is lower or equal to one.

⁵⁷ The three-step imputation approach is applied to the period 2000-2022.

⁵⁸ For more information, see https://afit-r.github.io/ts_exp_smoothing

⁵⁹ 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 levels of insecurity. For more information, see Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019, p.viii.

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*.⁶⁰

For countries and territories with at least one year of data on female intimate partner/family-related homicide (in the period 2010-2022), a penalty of plus and minus 1.6 per cent was added⁶¹ to the value of each estimate for each year of distance between the estimate and the closest observed female intimate partner/family-related homicide value. For countries and territories without any reported data on female intimate partner/family-related homicide, a maximum “penalty” is applied in the sense that the distance to the closest observed values is assumed to be 12 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 of their respective regions. In addition, regions with a greater number of countries without any reported data have even wider ranges.

⁶⁰ See Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019, p.ix.

⁶¹ The 1.6 per cent represent half the global average change in the ratio of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides. For the two regions with sufficient data coverage, Europe and the Americas, half the *regional* average change in the ratio of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides is used instead (Europe: 2.4 per cent; Americas: 0.24 per cent).

Globally, nearly 89,000 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2022, the highest yearly number recorded in the past two decades. Of all the women and girls intentionally killed last year, some 55 percent were killed by intimate partners or other family members (48,800 victims), showing that home is not a safe place for many women and girls. Although these numbers are alarmingly high, the true scale of femicide may be much higher. Too many victims of femicide still go uncounted – given inconsistencies in definitions and criteria amongst countries, especially concerning femicides committed outside the home. Global data availability on gender-related killings is, however, gradually increasing: while 74 countries had at least one data point on female intimate partner/family-related homicide in the period 2009-2015, this increased to 99 countries in the period 2016-2022. The UN system has taken concrete steps to assist Member States in improving data collection and reporting, including through the introduction and support for implementation of the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls.

This year's research brief on Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/ feminicide), Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022, is jointly produced by UNODC and UN Women.

The brief is the seventh issue of the Data Matters series, launched by UNODC in 2021:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/data-matters.html>