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2021 GUIDE

16dayscampaign.org

AWORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE IS POSSIBLE.

#LetsEndFemicide #30YearsOfActivism END FEMICIDE NOW.

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- Local level
 - Hold a community event
 - Initiate a community survey on femicide during this year's campaign
- National level
 - Engage in dialogue with your government and demand action
 - National and local media
- Regional level
 - Mobilize regionally to end femicide

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A WORLD without VIOLENCE IS POSSIBLE

AND THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS **MODIFIE**

2021 GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY GUIDE: end femicide mon

When launched in 1991, the Global 16
Days Campaign focused on raising
awareness about violence against
women (VAW) and securing its formal
recognition as a human rights violation,
which occurred in the form of a major
political breakthrough at the Vienna
World Conference on Human Rights¹
in June 1993. This was followed by the
formal adoption of the Declaration on
the Elimination of Violence against
Women,² in December 1993, by the
UN General Assembly, which was the
first international instrument to clearly
address VAW.³

For its 30th anniversary in 2021, the Campaign will focus on femicide, also referred to as the gender—related killing of women and girls,⁴ because we are at a critical turning point. There has been a surge in femicide in many countries due to lockdown and additional measures imposed to contain the COVID—19 pandemic. Restrictions on mobility, cuts in services, job losses, and an increase in the burden of women's unpaid care work have stalled progress on women's rights and in some instances led to rollbacks. High rates of femicide around the world are indicative of the

troubling disregard for women's lives and a preventable loss of human life, with pervasive impunity surrounding femicide reflecting the profound structural barriers and systemic discrimination faced by women and girls everywhere, as well as underlying misogyny.

The targeted use of extreme violence to eliminate women and girls is an inexcusable crime.

If you agree, join us to change the world!



ABOUT THE 2021 ADVOCACY GUIDE

The Guide aims to promote collective action to increase the visibility of femicide as an urgent global crisis and to emphasize the duties of governments and other key actors to end it. It is a resource for campaigners to draw increased attention to these killings at the global, regional, national, and local levels. It can be used to call for greater accountability and demand stronger measures for the recognition, prevention, and prosecution of all forms of femicide of women and girls; similarly demand adequate protection for women and girls; and outline coordinated action among stakeholders to end such killings.

The Guide discusses various aspects of femicide and recommends activities (see the "Action Menu" at the end) that can be under—taken during the 2021 Global 16 Days Campaign from November 25 – December 10, 2021, as well as throughout the year. We hope that this year's Campaign will amplify a much—needed conversation around femicide and be a call to action.

Women are most at risk of being **Rifled** by their intimate partners in Africa and the Americas.



WHY FOCUS ON FEMICIDE NOW?

URGENCY

The COVID—19 pandemic and its additional consequences, such as lockdowns, restricted mobility, and isolation from regular support systems, have contributed to increased gender—based violence (GBV) against women globally, as seen in the spike of domestic violence and femicide. A surge in femicides has been observed in countries such as **Spain**,⁸ **Mexico**,⁹ **United States**,¹⁰ **Namibia**,¹¹ **Turkey**,¹² and in other parts of the world.¹³ In **Iceland**, which also registered a spike in the first few weeks of lockdown, 50% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner,

Femicide is a crime against all of humanity.

Richard Lagos, Former
 President of Chile⁷

In Honduras, as per data from 2021 until March, a femicide was recorded every thirty—six hours.¹⁵ Based on data from 2017 and 2018, it is estimated¹⁶ that a woman is murdered every 3 hours in **South Africa**, with this seeing a surge¹⁷ since the COVID—19 pandemic. In the Caribbean, as per data from 2018, **Guyana** leads¹⁸ with 8.8 femicides per 100,000 women (compared to 6.8 in **El Salvador**, which has the highest rate in Latin America) and the gender—based violence crisis has further worsened¹⁹ during the pandemic.

These surges have happened in a broader context of rollbacks and regressions in women's rights. Even in countries where femicide is formally recognized as a crime, such as **Mexico**, there have been attempts to undo the law.²⁰ While most countries have been unprepared to deal with the surge, and many have cut vital support services, some have been pressed to deal with this crisis because of strong media attention and protests by activists.

IMPUNITY

Despite political commitments, obligations under international law, calls to action from local activists, and pressure from international bodies, governments have simply not done enough to end femicide or adequately prioritize it as a policy issue. This has contributed to the societal acceptance of femicide as well as widespread impunity. In addition, the lack of a universal definition of femicide and the failure to frame the issue as intentional murder resulting from misogynic intent and



actions have led to it being normalized and often ignored. In countries where there are laws banning specific forms of femicide, such as in connection with demands for dowry and allegations of sorcery, they are routinely flouted without any consequence.

Further, there has been a troubling trend of some cases, such as those against white women and girls, being taken more seriously and prioritized over others that reveal even greater impunity in cases involving, for example, Black, Indigenous, and other women and girls of color. Violence against women and girls of color and those from lower socio—economic backgrounds, as well as in certain occupations, typically receive far less attention from institutional gatekeepers. When the media does pay attention, harmful stereotypes are often replicated in the reports that cover these crimes.

STATE VIOLENCE

The past few years have seen a growing wave of feminist activism through public protests against femicide. In some countries these protests have been met with violence by State actors. Since 2020, State authorities in many countries have restricted public gatherings through lockdowns and other restrictive measures, interrupting the momentum of anti-femicide protests. Such drastic measures have also exposed the institutional failings on the part of law enforcement agencies in responding to individual cases of femicide. Further, many cases of femicide by the military and police have been brought to light although these murders are relatively less frequently reported in comparison to other types of violence.²¹ These cases reflect blatant abuses of power fostered by a lack of government oversight of law enforcement and security personnel.²²

The deaths of those killed by intimate partners do not usually result from random or spontaneous acts, but rather a culmination of prior gender—related violence.

- UNODC, 2019²³

WHAT IS FEMICIDE?

Dubravka Simonovic, Former Special Rapporteur, on violence against women:

Femicide is "the most extreme form of violence against women and the most violent manifestation of discrimination against women and their inequality."24

The term femicide has been defined,²⁵ interpreted,²⁶ and applied in different contexts. According to the World Health Organization²⁷ "Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls."

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, has defined²⁸ "femicide, or the gender—related killing of women," as "the killing of women because of their sex and/or gender."29 According to South Africa's Femicide Watch, "femicide is the killing of a female, or perceived female person on the basis of gender identity, whether committed within the domestic relationship, interpersonal relationship or by any other person, or whether perpetrated or tolerated by the State or its agents, and private sources."30 The 2021 Global 16 Days Campaign will draw on these global and local definitions and interpretations while recognizing the prevalence of many different types of gender—related killing of women and girls, which may or may not be described universally in these terms, in law or practice.



HOME IS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR A WOMAN

Cases of femicide are typically preceded by previous threats, harassment, abuse, or other forms of GBV.³² This suggests that these killings can be prevented. What is most troubling is that in many instances, these killings are perpetuated by intimate partners. For example, 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017. While this figure represents less than one—fifth (18%) of all victims of intentional homicides that year, what is revealing is that more than half (58%) of all female victims of intentional homicide were killed by an intimate partner.³³

Although intimate partner/family—related femicide constitutes a significant form of femicide, there are many kinds and types of femicide referred to by different terms/vocabularies (informed by different settings and community contexts) that need equal attention. While men are in most cases the main perpetrators of gender—related killings of women and girls, women can also be the perpetrators of violence against other women.³⁴ In some countries femicides are committed by "hitmen" hired by someone else.³⁵

The absence of a universal definition for femicide does create challenges. For example, data collected by countries become non—comparable and hence, the scale of the phenomenon cannot be adequately represented at the global and regional levels.

An exception to this is the indicator "female victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members," which has standard definitions across many countries and can be used to produce comparable data. At the same time, this indicator is not exhaustive enough to capture the killings of women outside the family sphere.³⁶

It is important not to allow the lack of a universal legal definition to become an obstacle to recognizing and calling out the occurrence of gender—related killing of women and girls in its many forms and contexts. The focus must be on exposing these killings based on their common elements, strengthening prevention by tackling its root causes and providing legal and other forms of redress to women and girls at risk as well as immediate family members who have lost loved ones – a daughter, a sister, or a mother – to these killings.

Not many countries compile national level data on the specific "circumstances surrounding gender—related killings of women and girls."³⁷ The UNODC recommends that countries implement the International Classification of



WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF FEMICIDE AND ITS DRIVERS?

Scholars, advocates, and activists have identified and categorized various forms of femicide in the past decades depending on context, differentiating between direct and indirect as well as intimate and non—intimate femicide.

Former Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, identified different categories of femicide which may be "active or direct, with defined perpetrators" or "passive or indirect." 40

•• The direct category includes: killings as a result of intimate—partner violence; sorcery/ witchcraft—related killings; honour—related killings; armed conflict—related killings; dowry-related killings; gender identityand sexual orientation—related killings; and ethnic—and indigenous identity—related killings. The indirect category includes: deaths due to poorly conducted or clandestine abortions; maternal mortality; deaths from harmful practices; deaths linked to human trafficking, drug dealing, organized crime, and gang—related activities; the death of girls or women from simple neglect, through starvation or ill—treatment; and deliberate acts or omissions by the State.⁴¹

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

The intentional killing of women and girls globally is driven by the prevalent cultures of misogyny, machismo, patriarchy, toxic and violent masculinity, male entitlement, the misuse of religious texts, rigid traditional and cultural stereotypes of gender, and the miscued construction of honor.

Despite linguistic, contextual and legal variations and limitations, a recurring theme across distinct types of femicides is the "misogynistic" and "anti—feminine" intent that precede the homicides and violent killings of women.⁴² **Mexico**, one of the first Latin American countries to legislate on the term "**feminicidio**," adopted the "General Law of Access for Women to a Life Free of Violence" in 2017, which acknowledged how such incidents are "produced by the violation of [women's] human rights in public and



private spheres and formed by the set of misogynist actions."43

A report issued by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability entitled, "#CallItFemicide" notes that there is resistance to addressing the role of misogyny in sustaining gender—based violence because it is embedded in the systems that women and girls must face on a daily basis namely, "Patriarchal social structures and systems such as the police, courts, corrections, our governments, our education systems, our health care systems, and the media."⁴⁴

THESE KILLINGS ARE INTENTIONAL

Femicide does not happen randomly. Perpetrators typically employ cultural stereotypes of women being subordinate and fragile when deciding to kill a woman to uphold ideas of male dominance, discrimination, and indifference to women's lives.⁴⁵ They also have shared motivational characteristics which include being overly possessive of their victim, having jealousy and fear of abandonment issues, struggling with mental health problems, having a history of violence toward the victim, and often having a background of violence and drug and alcohol abuse. 46 Perpetrators rarely admit to the grave crime they have committed right after their murders, and often show no regret over the killing.

Although there are specific motivations that drive the intentional murdering of women, perpetrators kill women because they can, even when there are no obvious risk factors that create an environment ripe for femicide, such as crises, conflicts or wars. In some contexts, a combination of superstition, harmful gender—stereotypes and violent narratives enable femicides to occur with impunity as seen across **Papua New Guinea** where torture and lethal violence are used to kill people in cases of "sorcery accusation related violence" also known as SARV.⁴⁷ The majority of these attacks are against women.⁴⁸

THE PERVASIVENESS OF FEMICIDE

Femicide can result from interpersonal violence, collective violence, or self—directed violence. Naming and framing this fatal injustice against women and girls is crucial to highlighting its prevalence worldwide. Femicide pervades all spheres.

FEMICIDE IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Femicide in the private sphere is often the result of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Domestic Violence (DV), or interpersonal and familial relationships that take place in the household. IPV and DV are about the perpetrator, often a current or former partner or spouse or immediate family member, using violence to exert power and control over the victim due to patriarchal gender stereotypes. In its extreme form, violence turns deadly, resulting in femicide. In many cases, female family members act as agents to aid the men committing the murders. Like other forms of IPV, femicide occurring in the private sphere is significantly underreported. Following are some examples of femicide that take place in the private sphere.

LEGALLY SANCTIONED FEMICIDE

Legally sanctioned femicide happens when existing laws give men the right to murder their wives if they suspect adultery. For example,

Article 153 in the Kuwaiti penal code states that if a man finds his wife or female relative with another man in an adulterous relationship, and if he kills her or her partner, he will face no more than three years in jail and/or a fine of around \$745. The legal system in **Kuwait** was formed based on a mesh of Islamic law, French civil law, Egyptian law, and British common law, and this article was formulated based on the 1810 French Civic code, Article 342.

DOWRY—RELATED FEMICIDE

Dowry—related femicides are economically motivated murders in which a wife is killed or forced to commit suicide through her in laws' torture and abuse. Dowry is a tradition prevalent in South Asia whereby the bride's family gives a sum of money or property to the groom's family. Femicide happens when large dowry requests are not fulfilled by the bride's family. Despite the fact that many of the countries in which dowry deaths are prevalent have adopted legislation banning the practice of dowry, it remains embedded in religious and cultural traditions in specific countries and related crimes of harassment and murder often go unpunished.⁵¹ Dowry related violence and deaths are predominant in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Iran.⁵² In **Pakistan** 2,000 dowry deaths were reported annually⁵³ while in **India**, over 8,000 such cases were reported each year from 2008-2012.54

FEMICIDE—SUICIDE

Femicide—suicide, or the crime of driving a woman or girl to suicide by abusing them repeatedly, is the most common form of

homicide—suicide⁵⁵. Femicide—suicide accounts for the vast majority of homicide—suicides⁵⁶. Women are driven to commit suicide due to being fed—up with the ongoing torture, rape, and harassment by the perpetrators and the lack of accountability. **El Salvador** is the only country in the world with a law against femicide—suicide. In many countries the State often covers up femicide—suicide as unexplained deaths, such as in **Egypt** and **Turkey**.

In **South Africa**, which takes a different approach, femicide—suicide is defined as a suicide committed by a perpetrator "within a week of

Intimate partner

interpretation continues
to take a
disproportionately
heavy toll on women.

- UNODC, 2019⁴⁹

killing a female person."⁵⁷ Thus, in that context, "intimate—femicide suicide" is characterized by the perpetrator committing suicide after killing a female intimate partner.⁵⁸



"HONOR" KILLINGS

"Honor" killings are related to a culturally miscued understanding of women being the upholders of familial and societal honor. If for any reason the woman asserts her right to autonomy and agency by refusing to marry a chosen suitor or challenges rigid gender roles by identifying as queer or transgender, she may be killed in the name of protecting and preserving the family's "honor". According to the Honour Based Violence Awareness Network, there is a dearth of information about the prevalence of this type of femicide due to weak reporting and documenting of the crimes. The network cites an estimated 5000 "honor" killings internationally every year, with the highest numbers occurring in **India** and **Pakistan.**⁵⁹ While it is important to highlight this type of femicide, it is equally crucial to note that the label of "honor—killings" have been critiqued by feminists for being deployed as a racist and colonial discursive tool to reinforce images of the civilized west versus the barbaric other. The misuse of this label instead of calling it femicide also erases the complicity of governments in decriminalizing femicide.

FEMICIDE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

It is important to examine the problem of femicide in relation to structural or systemic violence. Violence doesn't happen in a vacuum but is rather built into institutions, laws, discourses, and norms and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life experiences. This violence impacts the everyday lives of women and girls but often remains invisible and normalized, such as with femicide. Here are some examples of femicide that take place in the public sphere.

ARMED CONFLICT FEMICIDE

Armed conflict femicide is perpetrated by state and non—state actors as a "weapon of war." The perpetrators abuse women and girls physically, sexually, and psychologically with the intention of dehumanizing and punishing them, and to inflict pain and fear on the communities to which these women and girls belong. It is a war tactic used to terrorize and control people and these femicide cases are often premeditated and intentional acts against selected victims.



The Global Study on Homicide: Gender—related killing of women and girls conducted by the UNODC states that mass rapes and killings of women and girls were documented in the conflicts in **Rwanda** in 1994 and more recently in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo.** Mass killings of Yazidi women by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are reported to have taken place in recent years in the Sinjar District in Iraq, where several mass graves have been discovered.⁶¹ In many instances, the brutality of the violence experienced by women and girls further leads to suicide attempts among the victims and survivors who subsequently experience stigma in the family and within their communities. 62

FEMICIDE IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

Femicide in political and public life happens when judges, activists, academics, or journalists, who publicly condemn and advocate against gender—based violence or injustices, are targeted and murdered. For example, in 2018 in Brazil, feminist and human rights activist Marielle Franco was shot and murdered in her car after delivering a speech in an area north of Rio de Janeiro. She was known for her public critique of police and state violence. More recently, in Afghanistan, women judges have been targeted and two women Supreme Court justices were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in January of 2021.⁶³

SEXUAL—FEMICIDE

Sexual—femicide that is committed by someone without an intimate relationship with the victim is also known as non—intimate femicide. This can be random but can also be linked to the systematic murders of women and girls. "The sexual violence involved in sexual

Home is the most likely place for a woman to be killed in four out of five regions of the world.

- UNODC, 2019⁵⁰

femicide may range from leaving the victim unclothed, often displayed publicly, to rape, sexual assault, and sexual mutilation."64 This type of femicide can occur in the context of human trafficking and, in some cases, non intimate femicide can also disproportionately affect women involved in marginalized and stigmatized professions, such as sex work and work in bars and nightclubs. According to the World Health Organization, more than 700 women were murdered in **Guatemala** in 2008; many of these murders were preceded by brutal sexual abuse and torture. In the **United States**, two mass school shootings in 2006 were characterized by gunmen singling out girls and female teachers. 65 The 1989 École Polytechnique massacre in Canada, also known as the Montreal Massacre, was perpetrated by a mass shooter who killed 14 women because he was "fighting feminism."

ORGANIZED CRIME—RELATED FEMICIDE

Organized crime—related femicide involves the murdering of women who are associated with gangs, drugs, smuggling, and/or gun markets. This type of femicide can involve abduction, torture and sexual assault, murder and mutilation, decapitation, public displays and/or dumping of naked bodies and/or body parts. It is clear that these femicides are often fueled by an ingrained culture of toxic masculinity, extreme gang, drug related violence, and corruption, as well as an unaccountable police force. In Honduras, where deaths linked to drug trafficking and gang—related activities are widespread, it has been reported that "60 per cent of registered cases of femicide are linked to organized crime, in the context of which women and girls are often killed in acts of vengeance between gangs, and victim's bodies reveal acts of mutilation and torture."66 In the case of the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez. Mexico between 1993 and 2007, a study determined that systematic sexual femicide in Juárez accounted for 31.8% of the murders. 67

FEMICIDE IN THE WORLD OF WORK

Femicide in the world of work is often related to the oppression and exploitation of women workers as they face precarious working conditions in the global supply chains and Free Trade Zone/Special Economic Zones. These workers are typically denied legal and social protection and are vulnerable to work—related exploitation. The risk of violence is usually ignored by complicit business entities, global brands, and recruitment agencies. Institutions seek profit and governments ignore the murders and provide no legal protection or accountability for the murders.

Pervasive corruption in the supply—chain ecosystem fosters these killings. In the special free—trade manufacturing zones known as "maquilas" in **Mexico**, young women who walked the streets to get to work were perceived as "public women" selling sex, which led to them being opportunistically targeted and murdered.⁶⁸ These murders were fueled by an ingrained culture of toxic masculinity or machismo and a nexus of extreme gang, drug—related violence, a corrupt police force, and employers who resorted to victim—blaming when these cases occurred. Persistent violence and harassment in the workplace when left unchecked can culminate in femicide for women workers as a form of retaliation, in cases when they attempt to protest.

Jeyasre, 20

The murder of 20—year—old Jeyasre Kathiravel, "an Indian Dalit woman who was a garment worker and union member organizing against gender—based violence and harassment at a major Indian garment manufacturer" which had "business with many prominent U.S. and European fashion brands" illustrates how a continuum of violence in global supply chains can lead to femicide.

Jeyasre faced months of sexual harassment by her supervisor before he murdered her. ^{33 70}

Following her death, "25 other women garment workers at the same factory" came forward and "publicly described a culture of gender—based violence and harassment" at the unit where Jeyasre worked namely, Natchi Apparels.⁷¹



TAKING AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

An intersectional approach to femicide considers the specific vulnerabilities of different populations and aims to transform unequal power relations.⁷² The heightened vulnerabilities faced by certain populations of women and girls stem from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination because of their age, gender, ethnicity, immigration status, race, and sexual identity. The likelihood of impunity that perpetrators of gender—based violence face for crimes committed against these sub—groups is also high. The COVID—19 pandemic has worsened the existing inequalities faced by these communities. which has in turn made them more prone to gender—based violence and femicide.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

It is estimated that women and girls with disabilities are at least two to three times more likely than women without disabilities to experience violence and abuse in various spheres.⁷³ Although there is a higher incidence of violence against women with disabilities, femicides of women with disabilities remain a "largely invisible problem, as data on this issue is not consistently collected and remains anecdotal if it is collected at all."⁷⁴

Girls with disabilities are often the victims of infanticide as "their lives are devalued."75 According to the 2014 Latin American Model Protocol, femicides of women with disabilities share similar characteristics with those against older women, including "a history of prior violence throughout the duration of a relationship with the perpetrator, excessive force, and the victim's inability to resist."⁷⁶ In countries such as **Argentina** which criminalizes femicide, neither the State collected Unique Registry of Gender—Based Violence Cases nor other civil society efforts to monitor and document gender—based violence, including femicide, collect data on violence against women with disabilities.⁷⁷

INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Indigenous women around the world experience a high risk of femicide. In the **United States**, murder is the "third—leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women."⁷⁸ There were 5,712 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls documented in 2016,⁷⁹ yet, only 116 cases were logged into the US Department of Justice's federal missing persons database.80 Data from Canada, where the homicide rate of aboriginal females was almost seven times higher than that for non—Aboriginal victims,⁸¹ shows similar trends, in terms of victimization and lethal violence among Indigenous and aboriginal women.82 The regions of Central America and Oceania also reveal similar trends. In Australia, "Aboriginal women are 17 times

more likely to die from homicide compared to non—Indigenous women."⁸³ Existing data points to the under—resourced nature of services in responding to the needs of survivors and victims of GBV among Indigenous women, which heightens the risk of femicide. For example, there are only 58 Native domestic violence shelters nationwide for the 574 federally recognized Indian tribes in the United States.⁸⁴ Furthermore, 1 in 3 Native female victims of violence faces unmet service needs.⁸⁵

WOMEN OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Women of African descent face heightened risks and vulnerabilities, whether they are the dominant population or a minority, due

to the convergence of multiple forms of discrimination based on sex, gender, race, and other factors. For example, in the **United States**, Black women have experienced the highest rates of homicide with over half of all homicides (55%) being related to IPV."86 Black women aged 25—29 have been "11 times more likely as White women in that age group to be murdered while pregnant or in the first year after childbirth."87 Their risk of femicide is compounded by the prevalence of firearms. For example, data shows how Black women are most commonly murdered by firearms, compared to women from other racial groups.88 They are also at increased risk of violence and femicide by law enforcement. Black women are about 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police than white women.89



DALIT WOMEN

Dalits, formerly known as "Untouchables", are deemed the lowest caste⁹⁰ in the hierarchical system of "caste," that is based on ideas of ritual purity, pollution, and social status. The caste system is widely prevalent in **India**, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, where Dalit communities face multiple forms of social exclusion and oppression.⁹¹ **India** alone has an estimated female Dalit population of 100 million.92 Dalits are divided into sub—castes and categorized based on their occupation as "street sweepers, agricultural workers, and manual "scavengers" among others."93 Although they are engaged in agriculture, they are often landless communities⁹⁴ and generally face⁹⁵ high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and health disparities, compared to non—Dalit communities. Consequently, Dalit women in India face multiple forms of oppression and a heightened risk of violence.⁹⁶ Based on data⁹⁷ from 2013, the average age of death for Dalit women is 14.6 years younger than for higher—caste women. In 2020, numerous

Female sex workers have the highest remicide victimization rate of any set of women ever studied.

- UNODC, 2019¹⁰⁷

cases of femicide were reported among Dalit women, which followed a pattern of gang rapes and murder.⁹⁸ In **Nepal**, Dalit women are disproportionately impacted by allegations of witchcraft and are murdered.⁹⁹

WOMEN IN PRECARIOUS AND STIGMATIZED FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Informal women workers face heightened risks to violence and harassment in their world of work due to the precarious nature of their employment and sometimes due to stigma. The brutal murders of domestic workers in Cypress, 100 Saudi Arabia, 101 Lebanon, 102 Kuwait, 103 Ethiopia, 104 and in other countries documented from 2018—2021 stand testimony to this. The migrant status of domestic workers and exploitative practices like the 'Kafala system,' where their presence in a country is legally tied 105 to their employer leads to restricted mobility and freedom, making them more vulnerable to gender—based violence and femicides.

Similarly, the femicide of sex workers is linked to a high level of impunity. In many instances, "their death is seen as a hazard of the job and is often at the immediate hands of a buyer rather than the traditional idea of an "intimate partner." According to Femicide Census, they are often excluded from domestic homicide reviews. Additionally, most governments do not recognize sex work as legitimate work, thereby making sex workers extremely vulnerable to physical and sexual violence from State actors, without any consequence for perpetrators or redress for victims. 110

Mélanie, 22

22—year—old Mélanie emigrated to Saudi Arabia from Madagascar to be employed as a domestic worker in 2018. After escaping from her employer's home, she turned to prostitution and she was eventually found murdered under suspicious circumstances in 2020.

Her body was found in the bush outside of Dammam in October 2020. I contacted the Malagasy embassy in Riyadh, but no one did anything about it and her body was left there, outside, for two or three months. At that time – last October – the Riyadh airport was closed and around 85 Malagasy female domestic workers needed to leave Saudi Arabia after having broken their contracts. It was only then that the Malagasy embassy got her body. In the end, Mélanie was buried without a coffin. This is unacceptable. In Madagascar, there is a lot of respect for the dead. There are very specific traditional funeral rights. 35 106



NON-BINARY WOMEN

Across the world, femicide of transgender women often faces high level of impunity, including the fact that the crimes often go uninvestigated. For example, according to media reports, as many as 98% of murders in Mexico go unsolved and unpunished.¹¹¹ Trans people who were homeless, sex workers, disabled, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, poor, and/or elderly were acutely impacted by the COVID—19 pandemic.¹¹² The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) tracked a total of 44 "violent and fatal incidents against transgender and gender non—conforming people" in the United States, thereby marking 2020 as

"the most violent year on record, since HRC began documenting these crimes in 2013.¹¹³

Another violent crime against non—binary women, specifically lesbians, is "corrective rape" which "entails the rape of a member of a group that does not confirm to gender or sexual orientation norms." 114
Such incidents 115 have been documented in South Africa, United States, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, and India. According to South Africa's Femicide Watch, "sexual orientation femicide" is driven by the notion that "lesbians steal intimate partners from men" 116 and demonstrates the convergence of patriarchy and white supremacy. 117

The most violent year on record in the United States since HRC began documenting these crimes in 2013. 113

Zuleimy, 14

"Zuleimy was just 14 years old when she died, shot on a street in Trujillo, on Peru's northern coast. By some accounts, she was murdered by a boyfriend 9 years her senior who had accused her of infecting him with HIV. Although criminal legislation specifically punishes "femicide," the murder of a woman by a partner or other person with a close relationship, Zuleimy's death does not count as femicide. That's because, under Peruvian law, Zuleimy—a transgender woman was not female. ⁵⁵118 GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN GUIDE, 2021 | CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP 15 AIDS—related illnesses are the leading cause of death for adolescent girls and women aged 15—49.

- UNAIDS 128

FEMICIDE IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

The 2013 guidelines published by WHO identified violence against women as a "health priority." A public health perspective recognizes the "health consequences of violence to women and its "enormous costs to the society." 120 It also acknowledges the role¹²¹ of health and social care professionals in addressing gender—based violence. A public health approach envisions that violence, "rather than being the result of any single factor, is the outcome of multiple risk factors and causes," which interact across four levels: individual, close relationship/family, community, and wider society.¹²²

Gender—sensitive public health approaches can play a crucial role in early detection and prevention of violence or long—term care and rehabilitation, thereby ensuring that gender—based violence incidents do not spiral into homicides and suicide—femicides. Studies¹²³ have shown that "abused women have significantly worse physical and mental health than non—abused women." Other studies¹²⁴ have also explored an association between domestic violence and delayed physical effects, especially arthritis, hypertension, and heart



disease. The psychological dysfunction resulting from abuse can also heighten the risk of suicide among women.¹²⁵

Women may be particularly vulnerable to certain health risks due to the male dominance that undergirds femicide and their lack of autonomy in relation to their sexual and reproductive health. Decades ago there were calls to recognize the deadly consequences of HIV/AIDS on women as "a form of mass femicide" driven by a combination of factors including "AIDS, male sexism and domination, genital mutilation, and rape." Since then, advocates, policy—makers, and researchers have described deaths related to HIV as femicides and drawn attention to the evidence gap on the links between them.

According to UNAIDS, AIDS—related illnesses are the leading cause of death for adolescent girls and women aged 15—49.¹²⁸

According to UNFPA, 810 women die each day from "preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth." In 2020, the global number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births recorded an increase and is expected to reach twice the target set in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. On average, a notable percentage of maternal deaths (13.2%) are attributable to unsafe abortions, with a higher number of deaths for every 100,000 unsafe abortion occurring in developing countries, led by those in sub—Saharan Africa. These deaths are a form of indirect femicide and require more attention.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT TO DO?

GOVERNMENTS ARE OBLIGATED TO END FEMICIDE

The legal basis for protections against the gender-related killing of women, and political will, start with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration, especially the right to life, liberty, and security of person, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex.¹³³ The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as any act of gender—based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private spheres.¹³⁴ The definition of discrimination against women under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women includes gender—based violence, that is, "violence which is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately." 135

These instruments are supplemented by global policy documents which have been developed by consensus and adopted by governments, such as the 1995 Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. 136 It describes violence against women as an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development, and peace, while emphasizing that such violence both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. 137

GOVERNMENTS HAVE MADE COMMITMENTS TO END FEMICIDE

At the inter—governmental level, a number of United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) resolutions call for strong action against the gender—related killing of women and girls while allowing governments to determine the terminology that will be used in their own national legal frameworks.¹³⁸ For example, a 2013 resolution entitled "Taking action against the gender—related killing of women and girls" which is viewed as the first time that this issue was placed on the highest level of the international political agenda,¹³⁹ affirms the commitment of governments to work together "in full compliance with international and national legal instruments" to end such crimes.¹⁴⁰ It notes that the elimination of this type of discrimination is an "integral part" of efforts towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women.¹⁴¹

Expanding on this resolution, a 2015 UN GA resolution bearing the same title takes note of national and international judicial decisions that condemn "mass killing of women and girls." It encourages governments to "take measures to prevent and investigate acts of violence against women and girls and to prosecute and punish those responsible, no

matter who the perpetrators of such crimes are, and to eliminate impunity" as well as "to ensure that appropriate punishment for perpetrators of gender—related killing of women and girls are in place and are proportionate to the gravity of the offence."¹⁴³

ENDING FEMICIDE CALLS FOR A COORDINATED EFFORT

Coordinated efforts by a range of public and private actors, including institutions across different spheres, and engagement with civil society is needed to prevent and provide redress for femicide. This is affirmed in the 2015 resolution that calls on governments

women and girls is among the least prosecuted and punished crimes in the world.

- A/RES/70/176, 2016 132



to "protect and support victims, drawing on the important role of civil society and ensuring effective cooperation between all relevant State agencies, including, where appropriate, the judiciary, prosecution services, law enforcement agencies, health and social services, and local and regional authorities." It envisions key roles for the UNODC and UN—Women to end gender—related killing of women and encourages international cooperation for these efforts.

ENDING FEMICIDE REQUIRES A MULTIFACETED LEGAL AND INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

Gender—related killing of women touches upon many different areas of international law and its solutions call for the adoption of an intersectional approach. A 2011 UN GA resolution focused on "strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women" encourages condemnation of "all acts of violence

There are no signs of a decrease in the number of gender—related killings of women and girls despite action being taken in some countries.

against women in situations of armed conflict, to recognize them as violations of international human rights, humanitarian law, and international criminal law," particularly when they involve murder.¹⁴⁷ In a report on women, peace, and security, the UN SG has noted the use of violence against women as a tactic to prevent them from participating in political and public life, and its emergence as an obstacle to ensuring their political representation in fragile settings, such as in countries like **Afghanistan** and **Iraq**, also recognizing it as a barrier to peace. 148 In a separate resolution, the importance of "preventing violence against migrant women through the implementation of a range of measures including those aimed at combating racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance" has been recognized.¹⁴⁹

FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS VICTIMS

Femicide does not only impact individuals but entire families. The provision of reparations is a core component of the due diligence obligation of governments to address violence against women which extends to femicide. Notably, the UN SG has called attention to the 1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power,¹⁵⁰ and emphasized that the definition of the term "victims" should "include members of the immediate family or dependents of the direct victim who require protection, assistance and support, reparation and compensation, especially in cases of gender—related killing of women and girls."¹⁵¹

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AGAINST GENDER—RELATED KILLING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS, UNODC, UN—WOMEN, OHCHR AND UNPFA, REITERATED BY THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ratify and implement relevant international and regional conventions
- Provide human, technical, and financial resources
- Enhance international cooperation and technical assistance

RECOMMENDATIONS ON DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- Identify elements to define gender related killing
- Analyze indirect forms of gender—related killing
- Collect and publish data regularly and transparently

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PREVENTION

- Counter harmful attitudes and gender stereotypes
- Enhance safety and protection from lethal violence
- Prohibit and criminalize violence against women

RECOMMENDATIONS ON INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, AND SANCTIONS

- Address risk factors for lethal violence
- Take action with due diligence and without delay
- Ensure offender accountability

RECOMMENDATIONS ON VICTIM SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

- Focus on victims' age, vulnerabilities, and sociocultural factors
- Ensure comprehensive protection, support and resources
- Ensure effective access to justice and adequate reparations

For additional recommendations, see the source: UNODC's Recommendations for action against gender—related killing of women and girls¹⁴⁶

REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

Regional human rights instruments and jurisprudence are particularly relevant to the discourse on legal standards and the duties of governments in response to the gender—related killing of women and the continuum of violence that precedes it. A Declaration on Femicide was first adopted in 2008 by the Committee of Experts of the Follow—up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), which states that "femicide" represents "the most serious manifestation of discrimination and violence against women" in Latin America and the Caribbean. 152 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa contains many provisions relating to the prevention of and remedies for gender—based violence with dedicated provisions for widows, 153 elderly women, 154 women with disabilities, 155 and those in situations of distress. 156 The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the "Istanbul Convention") condemns "all forms of violence against women and domestic violence"157 and provides a comprehensive framework for its prevention and redress, both civil and criminal.¹⁵⁸ It emphasizes four key pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and coordinated policies.¹⁵⁹

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO END FEMICIDE

A robust body of work on femicide or gender—related killing has been developed by former UN Special Rapporteurs on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

Among other things, they have identified an extensive set of direct and indirect categories of femicide and made repeated calls to governments to prioritize its prevention and redress, emphasizing the importance of collecting comparable data on femicide, in accordance with local contexts but, importantly, disaggregated by the relationship between victims and perpetrators, age and ethnicity of victims, together with information on the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators.¹⁶⁰ A former Special Rapporteur has further recommended that "data on femicide should be seen as an important indicator for the elimination of violence against women" for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁶¹

Led by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, at the time, on 25 November, 2018, the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform)¹⁶² issued a joint statement calling on governments to take stronger measures to end the "global epidemic of femicide" in which they noted the emergence of new types of GBV including online violence. This followed a previous statement issued on November 25, 2016, in which the experts jointly urged all stakeholders to guarantee every woman and girl a life free from violence by applying holistic integrated policies on prevention, protection, and prosecution of violence against women.¹⁶⁴

A GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION FOR FEMICIDE DATA COLLECTION

In observance of 25 November 2015, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, former Special Rapporteur, Dubravka Šimonović called upon all States to establish a "femicide watch," or a "gender related killing of women watch." 165

She emphasized the global need for data collection on femicide. Noting the recognition of this obligation under international human rights law, she explained that the establishment of a global "femicide watch" would bring a special emphasis to the analysis of these

statistics and data as a "catalyst for prevention and change." Noting the gaps in national systems including, to the collection and assessment of data, which effectively undermine the prevention of gender—related killing of women, she noted that the creation of these institutions would "stimulate more work across existing obligations, particularly regarding addressing social attitudes that accept or normalize violence against women and its most extreme forms resulting in killing." Bringing a name and a face to statistics also highlights the horrendous nature of the crime, the reality of patriarchal violence and the extreme pain and suffering inflicted on women and girls because of their gender.167

Since 2015, the mandate—holder has issued annual calls to governments, national human rights institutions and other stakeholder for the release of data."¹⁶⁸



PROMISING PRACTICES

As the urgency to end femicide increases, there are many good practices which can be replicated to accelerate progress. Activists can demand that their governments take similar measures and facilitate an exchange of information. A few are noted here.

FEMICIDE/GENDER—RELATED **KILLING OF WOMEN WATCHES**

Femicide/gender—related killing of women watches are mechanisms that governments have been asked to establish at the national level. to systematically compile and review data on femicide that can be used to guide policymaking and the formulation of effective responses. Numerous femicide observatories or femicide watch bodies have been created in recent years. Although they vary by name, methodology, and thematic scope, they signal the creation of institutional capacity to understand and address femicide in different parts of the world. In several countries such as **Argentina**, 169 Georgia,¹⁷⁰ Occupied Palestinian Territory/ State of Palestine, 171 and South Africa, 172 data collection is being done by governmental bodies at the national level e.g., a public defender, ombudsman or ministry. In France, Mexico, and **Spain** there are local observatories which carry out several crucial roles including monitoring, prevention accompanied by victim support. and rendering of advice to policymakers.¹⁷³

Academic institutions are leading efforts in some countries namely Canada, Honduras, Israel, and Romania among others.¹⁷⁷ Non—governmental organizations including women's rights organizations are playing a pivotal role in countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.¹⁷⁸ Other examples of countries where women's rights activists and

Femiciae watch

SOUTH AFRICA

The first "Femicide Watch" in the African Continent was established in **South Africa** by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. It is accessible via its website and provides a range of information and tools including a database on shelters, a risk assessment tool for women to determine if they are at risk of femicide, guidance on how to develop a safety plan and a hotline to report abuse. It recognizes different forms of femicide that are prevalent in South Africa including, among others: "religious killings" that encompass witchcraft; "misogynist slaying" which includes the serial killing of women stemming from a deep hatred of women; "human trafficking femicide" which includes acts of abduction, torture, rape, and

mutilation among others which culminate in murder and is linked to gang violence and used a means to reinforce cohesion within a gang and instill fear among opponents; and "sexual orientation femicide" which is believed to be driven by the notion that "lesbians 'steal' intimate partners from men." The murder of a "female prostitute" by a client is regarded as a form of IPV notwithstanding the short duration of the relationship. The website also provides information about regional courts that have been "upgraded to sexual offence" courts," of which there are 106 nationwide.

Sources: Femicide Watch, 174 Forms of Femicide 175

Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin American and the Caribbean (the Observatory) has made notable strides with respect to data collection on femicide by facilitating the creation of a "regional femicide indicator" which relates to the annual total number of gender—based killings of women as recognized under national law whether referred to as "femicide, feminicide or aggravated homicide due to gender." The development of a regional indicator has been brought about by the cooperation of governments in the region and the progressive legal recognition of femicide. The observatory receives official figures on femicide from countries in the region which allows them to produce regional estimates and disseminate comparative data in 32 countries, as of 2019.

Further, the Observatory has specifically developed a femicide indicator within the statistical framework of the regional statistical follow—up of the Sustainable Development Goals by incorporating the "rate of femicide" per 100,000 women" as a "complementary indicator" in relation to the achievement of specific targets under SDGs 5 and 16, which call for the following, respectively:

- SDG 5.2 "Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation."
- **SDG 16.1** "Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere."

See CEPAL¹⁷⁶

organizations have been playing a leading role in the face of increased impunity and backlash include **Mexico**, which has the largest NGO—led observatory in the region,¹⁷⁹ and **Turkey** where the government recently formally withdrew from a treaty aimed at violence against women and domestic violence.¹⁸⁰ These examples illustrate that that there are many different paths to strengthening data collection on femicide by public and private actors.

MEDIA INITIATIVE TO END FEMICIDE

On March 8 2021, the **Observer** launched a campaign to end femicide called "Name it. Know it, Stop it" with the aim of putting the spotlight on what it described as "the hidden

scandal of older women killed by men." 181 Prompted by data published by Femicide Census showing that 268 women aged 60 and above were killed from 2009–2018. and 1425 women were killed in 10 years, it announced via an editorial the launch of their own campaign to "stop the killing of women by men."182 This campaign is being undertaken in collaboration with Femicide Census and includes consistent coverage of femicide related stories as well as critiques of policy.¹⁸³

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

In March 2019, the Inter—American Model Law on the Prevention Punishment and Eradication of the Gender—related Killing of Women and Girls was adopted by

MESECVI and UN—Women. This model law has been developed as a tool to support governments in their efforts to review and amend legislation to effectively criminalize acts that constitute gender—related killing of women and girls and end impunity for these crimes.¹⁸⁴ Specific laws on femicide increase the prospect of punishment as well as extended sentences and recognition of the gendered specificities of these crimes. Eighteen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have introduced legal provisions criminalizing "femicide" or "feminicide" in national law among which two, **Argentina** and the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, classify it as "aggravated homicide." While in some countries these definitions apply only to cases where the perpetrator is a current or former partner, some have broaden the applicability of their laws to different circumstances such as Costa Rica, which has adopted the term "extended femicide." 186

DATA COLLECTION BY ACTIVISTS: FEMICIDE CENSUS

Femicide Census is a collaborative initiative launched in the **United Kingdom** in 2015 with the central goal of ensuring that dead women are not ignored.¹⁸⁷ Its new report by the same name captures ten years of femicide data in the United Kingdom and collates the details of thousands of femicides to demonstrate the scale of the violence and to explore whether lessons can be learned by viewing these cases together rather than as isolated incidents. It presents information about these killings with a focus on the crimes, the victims, the perpetrators, and the criminal justice outcomes. The report shows that the incidence of femicide has

not fallen in the United Kingdom over the years. Its findings have been used to raise awareness of femicide by bringing increased attention to the issue in the mainstream media and in the parliament. 188 The initiative monitors policy developments and often publishes critiques of state failures.¹⁸⁹

RECOGNITION OF MISOGYNY AS A HATE CRIME

Misogyny is a root cause of violence against women and many activists opine that its formal recognition as a hate crime would help generate much needed data on the crucial link between hostility to women and the spectrum of violence to which they are subjected, which may range from harassment and abuse, whether physical, emotional, or online to sexual assault, rape, and even femicide. The police would be compelled to record when a crime was motivated by hatred of someone's sex or gender.¹⁹¹ A misogyny hate crime policy was piloted by the Nottinghamshire Police in 2016 under which misogynistic behavior was classified as a hate crime or a hate incident depending on whether the behavior is criminal or not. The policy has reportedly brought about a change in attitudes. A formal evaluation recommended rolling it out nationally to "increase publicity and the reporting of incidents."192 Some critics are of the view that misogyny should not be recognized as a hate crime based on arguments such that women are not a minority. 193 However, in the **United Kingdom** in 2020, the Law Commission recommended that misogyny be recognized as a hate crime in England and Wales. 194

RETROGRESSION AND AGGRESSION BY GOVERNMENTS

TURKEY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

The Istanbul Convention is a landmark regional treaty that recognizes gender—based violence as a human rights violation and establishes binding standards for prevention and redress. It has been hailed as being in the same league as several landmark global women's rights instruments including the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action, as it provides detailed guidance to governments for ending violence against women.¹⁹⁵

Turkey was the first country to ratify this treaty in 2012, but in a dramatic turn of events and against the backdrop of a surge in cases of domestic violence and femicides, the government announced its decision to withdraw from the treaty by Presidential Decree. This decision took effect on July 1, 2021. This has proven to be devastating for women in Turkey where it is reported that 300 women were killed by intimate partners in 2020 and an additional 171 women were found dead in suspicious circumstances. The withdrawal has legitimately fueled concerns about women's safety and sparked major protests. 196 At a time when

hate crimes are incidents against women that are motivated by the attitude of men towards women and includes behaviour targeted at women by men simply because they are women.

- Nottingham Police 190

governments should be taking steps to ensure women's human rights, Turkey as reneged on its obligations, spurring an increase in cases of domestic violence and femicide.

Ideological opponents of women's rights in Turkey succeeded in instigating the country's withdrawal from the Convention through a misinformation campaign alleging that the Convention is a threat to the family and that it has been hijacked by LGBTI groups "attempting to normalize homosexuality," a stance that has been echoed by the government.¹⁹⁷ The events in Turkey symbolize

a broader attempt by fundamentalists to roll back women's human rights globally, at the expense of women's lives.

USE OF FORCE BY GOVERNMENTS TO SILENCE FEMICIDE PROTESTORS

Prior to the onset of COVID—19, there was a growing wave of public protests sparked by the artistic and feminist group Las Tesis in **Chile** through the song, "**Un violador en tu camino** (A rapist in your path)," first

performed on November 25, 2019, which both annually commemorates the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women and marks the first day of the annual Global 16 Days Campaign.¹⁹⁸ It has since gone viral and has been translated into several languages, and performed among other protest songs against GBV and femicide around the world.

Throughout 2020, on the pretext of COVID—19, many authorities banned and prohibited public gatherings with lockdowns and arrests, interrupting the momentum of these anti femicide protests. In the **United Kingdom**, for example, the Metropolitan Police arrested several protesters who gathered in a public vigil for Sarah Everard, a woman who was killed by a police officer. 199 In October 2020, protests in **Namibia** against GBV and femicide dominated the country, trending the **#ShutItAllDown** hashtag online. Protesters demanded the government declare a state of emergency over the rise of femicides in the country. Instead, protests turned violent as police officers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at the protesters, most of whom were women.

In August 2020, military police in **Chile** filed a criminal lawsuit against Las Tesis for their song, "**Un violador en tu camino**," accusing them of "inciting hatred and disobedience against authority."²⁰⁰ Following international pressure, including a statement from UN human rights experts calling on the government to drop the charges, concerned that such a case would have a "chilling effect on women in many other countries who are standing up for their human rights," the case was formally thrown out by Judge Ingrid Alveal in January 2021.²⁰¹

2021 GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN ACTION MENU

Eliminating femicide will require the individual efforts of many actors, as well as transformative shifts guided by feminist values and human rights standards at all levels – local, national, regional, and global. With the Global Campaign's focus on femicide this year, we will create a powerful convergence of voices and activities to demand urgent action and accountability to end femicide.

Many of you have been working to end femicide for years. With the recent surge in femicide in many parts of the world and longstanding struggles for justice led by mothers and family members of the victims of femicide, there is arguably an unprecedented moral imperative for each one of us to come forward and stand with those who are in this fight and not allow the women who have been killed to be forgotten.

Here is a reminder of what we are up against: thousands of women are being killed indiscriminately each year and they are being murdered because they are women.



Ending femicide is all about building a just and peaceful world for all. If you believe, like we do, that a world without violence is possible, join the Campaign's global call to action starting November 25, 2021.

Draw on the content in this Guide to take the actions that follow. Utilize the tips and templates provided below.

LOCAL LEVEL

HOLD A COMMUNITY EVENT

Since femicide lacks a legal definition in most contexts, it can be widely prevalent and at the same time virtually invisible. An activity at the community level can be a catalyst for a transformative conversation. When led by a trusted local individual or organization, it can help make the gendered killings of women more visible in the local community, which is exactly where cultural transformation is needed to de—normalize these killings and collectively challenge the misogyny that drives them.

- Break the ice by organizing an event to start a discussion about femicide.
 Use this guide to talk about its different forms, the duties of governments and good practices
- Build solidarity and commitment around the common purpose of naming femicide as a crime and make that the basis for future action. Integrate a call to action to end all forms of femicide, direct and indirect, in your current work

INITIATE A COMMUNITY SURVEY ON FEMICIDE DURING THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN

CONDUCT A SURVEY WITH THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- Generate findings which can be shared with local government officials and the media to draw urgent attention to the issue and start demanding action. This can pave the way for a formal and more detailed study in the future
- Identify at—risk women and girls in local communities and potentially help save their lives. Examine the circumstances of killings and whether there has been any recognition and redress provided to families who have lost loved ones to femicide
- Build solidarity for those most affected by the voids created by femicide and create a safe space for community dialogue on its occurrence as well as the institutional failings that contribute to these killings

Here's a link to a <u>survey</u> that can be easily tailored and translated to get you started. Use a timeframe that works for you.

ORGANIZE A PUBLIC READING OF NAMES

 Formally request that a local political leader hold a public reading of names of women and girls killed in the previous year. Include the names of those whose cases have been reported and/ or investigated and prosecuted

 Hold the hearing in a prominent public space to publicly demand an end to the impunity surrounding these killings, and arrange for media coverage to capture the symbolism of the event as well as any action that might follow

ORGANIZE A SYMBOLIC COLLECTIVE ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO GIVE VISIBILITY TO FEMICIDE

 Use the event to draw attention to the prevalence of femicide and publicly question the lack of government attention

 Ensure media coverage of the event to amplify key messages and any official reactions



NATIONAL LEVEL

ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT AND DEMAND ACTION

Femicide is a serious crime and yet one of the least recognized and addressed. Robust government action is needed to end impunity for femicide. In addition to being obligated to refrain from committing acts that may contribute to femicide, governments are obligated to take positive steps to ensure that these killings do not happen. With increased pressure on governments to urgently tackle the COVID—19 crisis, and less attention than ever being paid to the structural causes of gender—based discrimination and violence, or services and redress for victims, the risk of femicide being further neglected is greater than ever.

- All victims of femicide have the right to life. They have the right to live, and that right is being denied again and again. We need a ceasefire."
 - Diana Washington Valdez
 International author—journalist¹

PETITION THE HIGHEST EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY IN YOUR GOVERNMENT AND SEEK FORMAL COMMITMENTS TO

- Create a government—funded femicide watch to systematically gather disaggregated data on the prevalence of femicide
- Launch a task force to assess institutional responses to femicide and key gaps
- Strengthen measures to prevent femicide, protect women, and prosecute cases, and coordinate efforts across different sectors to end femicide

- Improve oversight of the police and security personnel to prevent abuses of power
- Develop a femicide indicator within the statistical framework of national statistical follow—up on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by incorporating the "rate of femicide per 100,000 women" as a complementary indicator in relation to SDGs 5 and 16

Here's a <u>template</u> that can be easily tailored and translated to get you started.



- Trainings for healthcare professionals to respond to the short—term and long—term impacts of gender—based violence through the provision of emergency services and timely identification of those at risk of lethal violence
- Services to address the mental health needs of victims and survivors of gender—based violence, since trauma and psychological dysfunction resulting from the abuse can heighten the risk of suicide among them, and establishment of the means to connect them with support services via the health system
- Recognition of violence against women as a major public health concern in national health policies and strategies so that specific funds can be earmarked for addressing direct and indirect forms of femicide

Here's a <u>template</u> that can be easily tailored and translated to get you started.



1. Diana Valdez, "Global 16 Days Campaign Special Commemorative Event," September 23, 2021.

MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (OR EQUIVALENT) TO STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO FEMICIDE AND THE PATTERNS OF GENDER—BASED VIOLENCE THAT OFTEN CULMINATE IN FEMICIDE

Key measures may include:

- Establish a legal framework criminalizing all forms of femicide to enable the investigation, prosecution, and dispensation of appropriate sentences in cases of femicide
- Conduct trainings for judges and police to strengthen the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of specific cases. Address gender—bias and stereotyping by institutional actors
- Strengthen the availability and enforcement of protection orders to address threats and incidents of violence that precede femicide

Here's a <u>template</u> that can be easily tailored and translated to get you started.

MAKE INQUIRIES ABOUT GAPS OR CUTS IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR CRUCIAL SERVICES AND DEMAND THAT THEY BE INTRODUCED OR REINSTATED TO STRENGTHEN FEMICIDE PREVENTION AND REDRESS

Areas of focus may include:

- Hotlines and shelters for those at risk of extreme violence and femicide
- Access to a full range of timely and quality reproductive health services including contraception, pre— and post—natal care, safe abortion, pre— and post—exposure prophylaxis and protection from female genital mutilation

- Legal aid for those seeking recourse against violent acts, including threats, and in cases of femicide where family members are seeking justice
- Timely issuance and enforcement of restraining orders and other protective measures
- Proper handling of reports of femicides and unbiased and timely investigations

REQUEST YOUR NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION TO LAUNCH A FORMAL INQUIRY INTO THE OCCURRENCE OF FEMICIDE

The objectives of a formal inquiry may include:

- Establish the prevalence, scope, and risk of femicide faced by women and girls, both direct and indirect, as well as in context specific settings and multiple spheres of their lives
- Issue recommendations for legal and policy reform to prevent and address femicide in accordance with international law and the recommendations issued by human rights mechanisms

Here's a <u>template</u> that can be easily tailored and translated to get you started.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL MEDIA

DRAW NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION TO FEMICIDE

National media coverage can help draw attention to the occurrence of femicide and generate an outcry. It can also help build solidarity with those fighting for justice, including mothers and other close family members, and draw attention to their plight as they are victims too and may face retaliation. It can also help create general awareness about the early signs of a potential femicide and possibly pre—empt new cases.

PUBLISH AN OP—ED IN A LEADING NEWSPAPER OR AUTHOR A BLOGPOST

Voice your experience and expertise and/or express solidarity.

- Answer the questions: who? what? when? where? and why?
- An op—ed should be 600—800 words.
 A blogpost can be more informal and lengths can vary
- A "lede" is an introductory line to entice
 the reader: e.g. "Joan called the police
 many times before she was killed by her
 husband Paul, but that did not save
 her." A "nutgraph" follows the lede and
 summarizes the theme of the article:
 "Joan is one of the thousands of women
 killed indiscriminately every year because
 they are women. Now, civil society groups
 have decided to take action and call on
 governments to do more."

Here are some additional <u>tips</u> to get you started.

PITCH AN ARTICLE

- Using email, send a one paragraph pitch of your article idea (see example).
 Keep it short. Don't send an entire article already written unless the editor asks for this
- Use short, simple sentences
- When discussing gender—based violence, take a survivor—centered approach and ensure that confidentiality is maintained in accordance with the wishes of surviving family members and that their consent is obtained

Here are some additional <u>tips</u> to effectively "pitch" an article.

ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE

- Highlight your activities, and the messages and stories of women whose killings have been ignored. It should be 300—500 words long
- Include relevant information (who, what, when, where, and why), facts and figures, contact information for expert sources, and dates and times of any events/webinars/public sessions

Here are some tips for a press release.

REGIONAL LEVEL

Femicide is prevalent in all regions of the world with some countries having made more normative and institutional progress aimed at ending it than others. However, certain forms of femicide are linked, for example, to cross—border illegal activities involving drugs, human trafficking, and migration for work and are likely to be more effectively tackled through regional cooperation.

MOBILIZE REGIONALLY TO END FEMICIDE

- Increase the utilization of regional normative frameworks and networks of organizations working actively to end gender—based violence to make femicide more visible as a regional human rights concern
- Call for joint action and technical cooperation to end femicide across regions through comparative data collection and assessments, and share promising practices

GLOBAL LEVEL

The enforcement of international legal standards requires the active utilization of international human rights mechanisms to expose state failures and demand accountability. Many activists demanding accountability for femicide have encountered state violence and retaliation for their actions. Expressions of solidarity and joint actions with activists worldwide can create a call to action that reverberates globally.

REPORT CASES OF FEMICIDE TO **AN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM**

 Increase pressure on your government to address femicide by submitting credible information about cases of femicide in your community via the Communications procedure for the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls. This could prompt a formal communication to your government

REPORT RETALIATION AGAINST **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS** FIGHTING TO END FEMICIDE

- Submit credible information about retaliation against human rights defenders protesting against femicide via the Communications procedure for the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls and/or the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. This could prompt a formal communication to your government
- Access the website here and the online form <u>here</u>. Write to them directly at urgent—action@ohchr.org.

CONNECT WITH THE GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN AND ACTIVISTS WORLDWIDE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

• Use the Global 16 Days Campaign Social Media Toolkit to join our call to action to end femicide

- Connect with the Global 16 Days Campaign by tagging us on Facebook and Twitter using the handle @16DaysCampaign
- Add a #16DaysCampaign frame to your profile picture
- Join or initiate Twitter chats, Twitter Spaces, Tweetathons, Facebook/Instagram live conversations, or other social media calls to action and engage @16DaysCampaign accounts on Facebook and Twitter, using hashtags **#LetsEndFemicide**, #30YearsOfActivism and #16DaysCampaign

JOIN THE ACTIVITIES OF GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN FROM NOVEMBER 25—DECEMBER 10, 2021

- Save the date for a global online event on December 6. Follow us on social media for more information about our events.
- View the 2021 Campaign Events and Activities Calendar on Facebook and Twitter @16DaysCampaign
- Submit your event (online or in—person) to be featured on the digital map on the Global 16 Days Campaign website via this <u>link</u>.



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GLOBAL 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN ALLIES AND LEADING VOICES AGAINST GBY AND femicide

BREAKTHROUGH INDIA

https://inbreakthrough.org/

FEM[IN]ICIDE WATCH

http://femicide-watch.org/

AFRICA WOMEN JOURNALISM PROJECT (AWJP)

https://theawjp.org/

CANADIAN FEMICIDE OBSERVATORY FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CFOJA)

https://www.femicideincanada.ca/

GENDER LINKS

https://genderlinks.org.za/

ABAAD

https://www.abaadmena.org/

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RESOURCES CENTER (NIWRC)

https://www.niwrc.org/

SOVEREIGN BODIES INSTITUTE

https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/

WIEGO

https://www.wiego.org/

GLOBAL LABOR JUSTICE-INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM (GLJ—ILRF)

https://laborrights.org/

DATA AGAINST FEMINICIDE

https://datoscontrafeminicidio. net/en/home-2/

FEMICIDE CENSUS

https://www.femicidecensus.org/

1. These are allies and partners who engaged with the Global 16 Days Campaign by participating in one-on-one meetings and online consultations on femicide (held on May 25 and July 28, 2021 respectively) and sharing of resources which helped shape the research on the 2021 Advocacy Guide.



We'd like to get your feedback!

Thank you for your commitment to women's rights as human rights and for helping to end gender-based violence in the world of work, once and for all.

Email 16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu with any recommendations to improve future versions of this Advocacy Guide.

Visit the official Global 16 Days Campaign website at www.16dayscampaign.org to share your activities and stay connected.







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CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 USA Phone: 848-932-8782 Fax: 732-932-1180