

# Femicide, its causes and recent trends: What do we know?



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## BRIEFING

# Femicide, its causes and recent trends: What do we know?

### ABSTRACT

Femicide is a violation of the basic human rights to life, liberty and personal security, as well as an obstacle to social and economic development. The term indicates the act of intentionally killing a female person, either woman or girl, because of her gender, and it is the end-result of combined risk factors existing at the level of the individual, interpersonal relations, community and society. This crime displays three prominent characteristics: women are disproportionately killed by men; victims have previously experienced non-lethal violence; the rate at which women are killed tends to remain steady over time. Estimates indicate that 87 000 women were intentionally killed in 2017, but the exact number is unknown and suspected to be higher. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation and reduced access to services.

Femicide's classification differs according to context, but most significantly includes: killing by an intimate partner or family member; honour, dowry and witch-hunting deaths; femicide-suicide; pre- and post-natal excess female mortality; infanticide; and deliberate neglect, rooted in a preference for sons over daughters. Collecting accurate data is a strategic goal and necessary to facilitate the design of effective policies.

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## 1 Scope of the Briefing

**Femicide is a violation** of some of the most **basic human rights**, namely the **right to life, liberty and personal security**. It is also **an obstacle to social and economic development**. Both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ([CEDAW](#)) and the [Beijing Declaration](#) clearly define discriminatory actions against women and urge States to commit to their prevention; these fundamental documents do not mention femicide. The [European Union \(EU\) Guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them](#), as well as the Gender Action Plan III ([GAP III](#)) include femicide and other violent deaths among different forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Because preventing and reducing femicide require accurate and comparable data, the **aim of this Briefing is to provide, in a global perspective, a concise overview describing the phenomenon, its prevalence in the world, the different social contexts in which it occurs and the prevailing risk factors**; and, at the same time, highlight some of the situations of most serious discrimination and risk. Annex I presents selected country profiles with at-a-glance information on public recognition, data collection and women's activism to prevent femicide. Annex II provides statistical data on the five continents. In the desk research phase that preceded the preparation of the Briefing, a special effort was made not to neglect countries of the world that are overlooked in empirical research but could be interesting for EU external action. **The Briefing also insists on what we do not know** about femicide, considering it at least **as important as what we actually know**. This Briefing is written at the time of an unprecedented pandemic, which has already manifested its effects on the most vulnerable populations, including women and girls. At such a time, improving knowledge and public recognition of femicide becomes even more urgent.

Unless otherwise stated, statistics and database details provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are used by this Briefing for assessing femicide's prevalence<sup>1</sup>. Any caveats on cross-national data comparison are clarified in the introduction to Annex II (p. 24). Although UNODC prefers the term 'gender-related killing of women' and despite gaps in global figures, it is nevertheless the most reliable international source of quantitative knowledge on femicide. Consultations with officials from the European Parliament's (EP) Directorate-Generals for Internal Policies and External Policies, the European Commission (EC) Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the EC Internal Cooperation and Development and the European External Actions Service greatly clarified the general framework of EU initiatives on violence against women and girls.

## 2 Definition

'Femicide' is a relatively new concept and the dominant term in official documents, as well as scientific and grey literature, albeit 'feminicide' is also employed elsewhere. It indicates the specific crime of intentionally murdering a female person, either woman or girl, because of her gender. Since the early 90s, this concept has been used by women's movements and, from the turn of the Millennium, it was also adopted in the social sciences to grasp those **characteristics which distinguish between the killings of women and men**, which were hitherto obscured by the neutral term 'homicide'<sup>2</sup>. Femicide is very often the last act in an abusive relationship and is therefore included in the overarching category of VAWG. However, to

<sup>1</sup> This Briefing uses two sources from UNODC: a) the 'Global Study on Homicide. Gender-related killing of women and girls', published in 2018 (with data from 2017); and b) the open access database, collected from national authorities through the United Nations Crime and Trends Survey; this is a dynamic source which carries information from 1990 to 2019 and is continually updated. The database was last accessed on November 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Femicide, as coined by feminist activists in 1976, places the male-female opposition at its root, in a time when 'man' and 'woman' were taken for granted. More recently, studies have criticised binary conceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity and they have argued for a more fluid understanding. Scholars studying victimisation of the LGBTQ+ communities prefer concepts such as 'hate crime' (Sandholtz et al., 2013), or 'anti-LGBT homicide' (Gruenewald and Kelley, 2014).

understand and thus be able to reduce or prevent it, we need to adopt an analytical approach aimed at **spelling out different forms, specific risk factors and characteristics of local contexts that victimize and ultimately lead to women killings**. This will be the task of sections 3.3 and 4 below; while the current and following sections frame the phenomenon from a general point of view.

What are the **specific characteristic of women killings across the world?**

- **Women are disproportionately killed by men.**  
In 2017, UNODC estimated that 87 000 women were intentionally killed. The global rate of female homicide was estimated as 2.3 per 100 000 of the female population. Approximately 90 % of suspects were male (UNODC, 2018).
- **Women are mostly killed in the context of intimate or family relationships.**  
From the total number of female victims, six out of ten women (58 %) were killed by a partner or male relative. One third were killed by a former or current partner. Women were victims in 82 % of all homicides carried out by intimate partners (UNODC, 2018).
- **Femicide victims have previously experienced non-lethal gender-based violence.**  
The vast majority of femicide cases occur as the final phase of interpersonal or domestic violence.
- Women's **social vulnerability, legal inequality and low access to education** – resulting in gender inequality, stereotypes and social discrimination – **are drivers of VAWG and femicide**.
- Because these cultural and social factors are subject to change on a long-term basis, **the rate at which women are killed tends to be more stable than that for men** (UNODC, 2018).
- **The rate of women killed increases as the overall rate of homicides decreases.**  
Because femicide is context and gender specific, policies that are successful in reducing male-to-male killing do not affect femicide. Thus, as the former's rate decreases, femicide remains unchanged or increases (Stamatel, 2014).

Studies conducted in high-income countries show that with regard to background, education, employment and criminal career, perpetrators were comparatively more conventional than male-to-male murderers. This may be applicable to other countries (Dobash et al., 2004; Muftic and Baumann, 2012).

Globally, more than 81 % of victims from intentional killing are men and they are even more likely to be the perpetrators, since over 90 % of homicide suspects are men (UNODC, 2018). While the causes of male victimisation are mostly linked to levels of socioeconomic development and are facilitated by alcohol as well as drug abuse, **female victimisation is more closely linked with the structural characteristics of societies, such as gender roles and status, as well as gender inequality**. Women continue to bear the heaviest burden of victimisation because of gender stereotypes and inequality.

The term 'femicide' is employed with slightly different implications and in different contexts. For quantitative data collection it tends to be used in a narrow sense, because statistics aim at rigorously and precisely measuring comparable indicators. As part of a penal code, 'femicide' acquires cultural connotations in conformity with any given country's legal terminology. Activists across the world use its political significance as leverage for mobilisation and awareness raising (EIGE, 2017).

Overall, there are two main definitions:

1. A narrow definition focuses on **femicide as intimate partner/family related killing**, which applies to 30 % - 58 % of female victims (depending on countries), as women and girls are mostly killed by male partners or relatives. Compared with definition 2 below, this understanding includes a greater amount of reliable information provided by national statistical agencies.

2. A broader definition refers to **femicide as the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender**. This is prevalently employed by feminist and human rights activists to indicate the misogynist intent of the perpetrator in a wide range of events such as: the killing of women in the context of organised crime and war; dowry-related and honour-related killings; death resulting from female genital mutilation; accusations of sorcery; as well as female infanticide and pre-natal sex selection (ACUNS, 2013; see Section 3.3). The political purpose of this notion is powerful and seeks to spotlight the patriarchal norms, stereotypes and forms of domination which lead to the violent deaths of women and girls. Because these acts occur in different local contexts, including isolated villages and rural communities, reliable data is more difficult to collect and compare across countries.

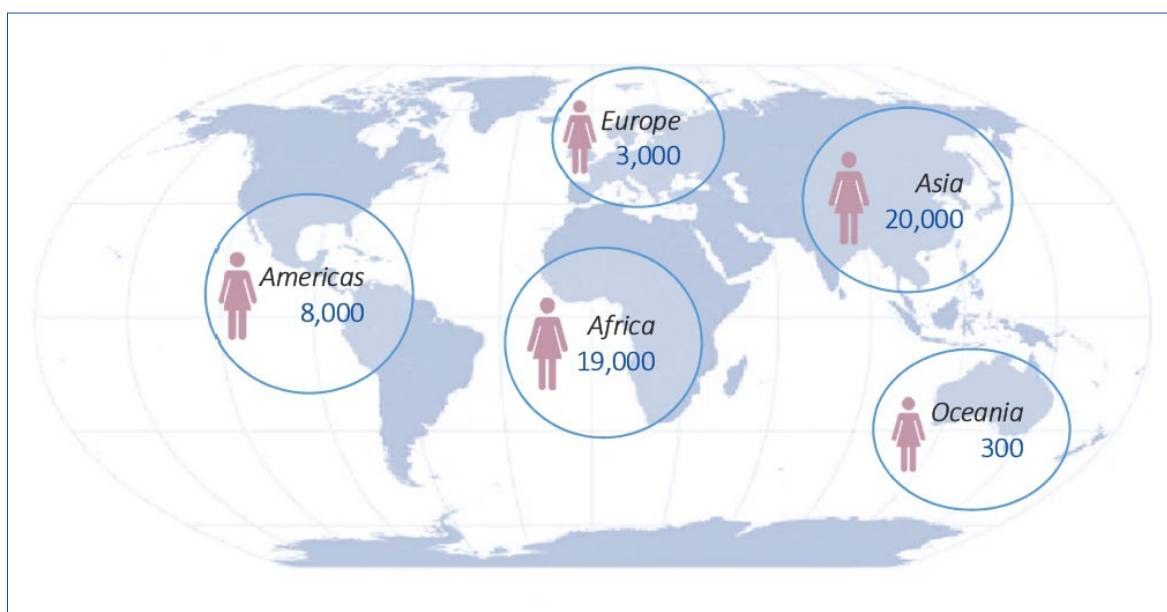
These two definitions are not contradictory and partly overlap. **In Europe, femicide is generally understood as killing by an intimate partner** (see definition 1 above), **but such a restricted notion does not cover the complete reality of this crime in our continent and across the world.**

### 3 Prevalence

Calculating the exact prevalence of femicide is certainly challenging. Not all countries regularly collect data and send it to the UNODC international database (under the headings 'women intentionally killed' and 'female victims intentionally killed by intimate partner/family member'), nor do they proceed in a comparable and systematic way. Different local agencies may collect data using broader as well as more limited notions (see definitions 1 and 2 above), or a legal definition which does not apply in other penal codes. Gaps across time are also very common, as not all countries submit statistics on an annual basis and for many the latest data available is not recent.

**UNODC estimates that 87 000 women were intentionally killed in 2017, of whom 58 % were killed by intimate partners or family members.** This is the most recent global estimate from reliable sources. That the most recent figures available are already five years old, evidently signifies the problematic nature of gathering accurate information. Calculating more recent figures is fraught with country gaps and irregular data input. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a real obstacle to data sourcing.

**Figure 1. Female victims intentionally killed by partner/family member in 2017**



Source: UNODC, Global Study on Homicide (2018).

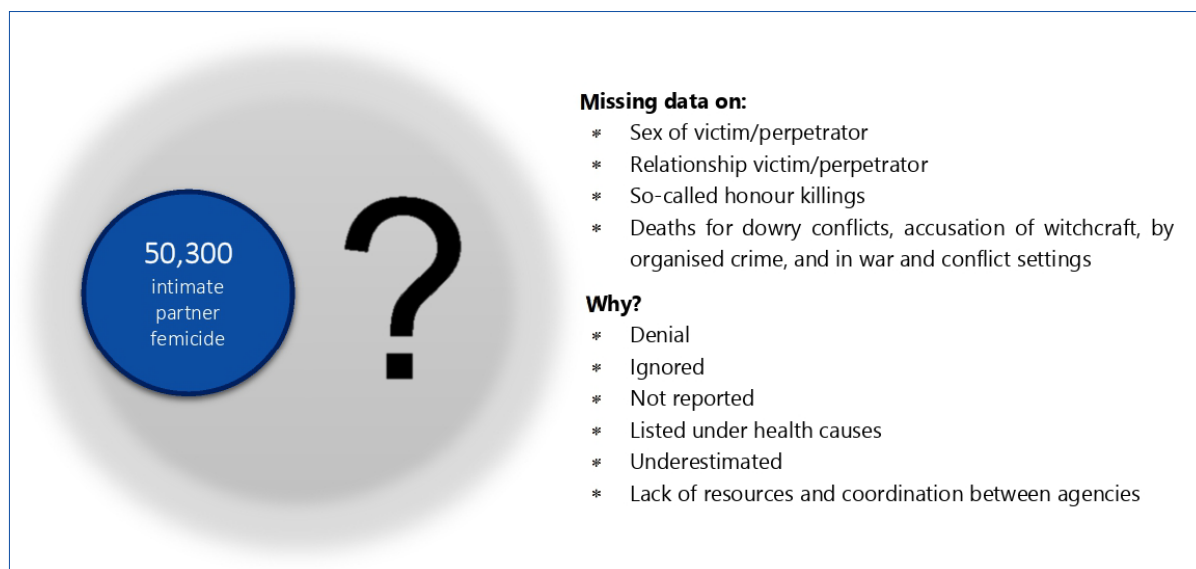
Figure 1 here displays **estimates** for **women intentionally killed by intimate partners/family** members over the five continents, **totalling 50 300 in 2017**. **Asia has the highest estimated number** (20 000), followed by Africa (19 000), the Americas (8 000), Europe (3 000) and Oceania (300). However, **when the**



**rate per 100 000 female population is calculated, Africa yields the highest share (3.1), followed by the Americas (1.6), Oceania (1.3), Asia (0.9) and Europe (0.7).**

Violence against women is widely under-recorded with less than 40 % of women victims reporting these crimes or seeking help of any sort (UN Women, 2021), which clearly leads to underestimation of VAWG, especially when data collection is carried out by public agencies. This is also translated as **denial and ignorance of femicide**, which is often the last step in abuse and violence. Figure 2 below attempts to illustrate the obscure estimate of femicide globally.

**Figure 2. The obscure estimate of femicide**



Source: author's original elaboration and UNODC (2018)

The best documented type of femicide is killing by an intimate partner or family member (see definition 1), which UNODC estimates at 50 300 in 2017 (see also Figure 1 above). However, this figure represents only one type of femicide, thereby corresponding to a narrow conception of this crime. A broader definition (see definition 2) includes killing with a misogynistic intent in a wide range of events, some of which will be analysed in Section 3.3 below. **Accurate counts and/or reliable estimates for the global prevalence of the different types of femicide are unknown and unavailable.**

While almost every country in the world has official mortuary registers from which to determine numbers of deaths, there are cultural and bureaucratic obstacles to registering women's deaths as 'femicide' in official statistics. **Such obstacles include: denial and disinterest in the problem; sheer underestimation of its magnitude which translates into misreporting; or lack of resources and multi-agency coordination towards making gender visible in hard-changing reporting practices** (a typical example is lack of communication between local mortuary registers and national statistical agencies). To the global figures above (Figure 1), one should add women's deaths that are wrongly listed under health causes, accident or manslaughter. Femicide cases in the context of human trafficking, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as war and conflict settings also fall into this obscured number (Figure 2). Where food is scarce, infant girls are discriminated against and more die of malnutrition in comparison to boys. Millions of women are missing due to excess pre- and post-natal mortality (see Section 3.3. 'Female sex selection' below). No accurate counts are available for these unreported female deaths because of gender, implying that femicide is far more prevalent than indicated in Figure 1.



### 3.1 Countries with highest prevalence

Caution is necessary when comparing data on crime, as variations between legal definitions and methods of collection can differ across countries. With these caveats in mind, Annex II presents statistics for female victims of intentional homicide in countries across the five continents and their sub-regions, as well as the corresponding rate per 100 000 of the female population. Data is sourced from the 2019 UNODC dataset. Female victims of intentional homicide include victims by intimate partners, as well as other types when available (see Section 3.3).

- In Africa (Table 2), South Africa has the highest rate (9.46 per 100 000), while Algeria has the lowest (0.37).
- In Oceania (Table 3), Fiji has the highest rate (2.82), while New Zealand has the lowest (0.54).
- In the Americas (Table 4), Venezuela and Belize have the highest rates (10.71 and 8.67 respectively), while Chile and Nicaragua have the lowest (0.97 and 1.6, respectively).
- In Asia (Table 5), Central Iraq<sup>3</sup> and India have the highest rates (3.57 and 2.66, respectively), while Myanmar and Bhutan have the lowest (0.14 and 0.28, respectively).
- In Europe (Table 6), Latvia has the highest rate (4.08), while Finland, Greece and Italy have the lowest (0.33, 0.36 and 0.36, respectively).

A brief glance at the Tables in Annex II immediately reveals that for 2019 in Africa and Asia – where estimates are among the highest in the world (see Figure 1) – data is available only for a limited number of countries.

Calculation of **trends in time** was possible only for an even smaller number of countries, as continual time-sequences of data are rarely registered. Tables of trends under Figures 3-16 (Annex II) show that **in Africa between 2010 and 2019** the number of intentional homicides targeting women has increased in Morocco, but appears to have decreased in Algeria and Egypt, while it is unchanged in Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania. **In countries of the Americas, between 2014 and 2019** the number of intentional female homicides has increased in Bolivia, Mexico and Venezuela, decreased in El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica and Dominica, whilst remaining unchanged in Colombia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Panama. **In Asia between 2014 and 2019**, the number of intentional homicides targeting women has increased in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Sri Lanka and Turkey, but appears to have decreased in Georgia, Mongolia, Myanmar and the Philippines, while it is unchanged in India, Israel, Japan, Palestine and South Korea. **In Europe between 2014 and 2019**, the number of intentional homicides targeting women has increased in Austria, Finland, Latvia and Montenegro, it has decreased in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Russian Federation and Spain, while it is unchanged in Ireland, Italy, Norway, Romania and the United Kingdom.

### 3.2 The COVID-19 pandemic

International organisations have started to disseminate evidence about the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on VAWG (UNODC, 2021; UN Women, 2021). As health and financial worries increase domestic tensions, emerging data present a diverse picture of trends. **Women with violent partners have found themselves not only isolated from relatives and friends but also unable to access services. This occurs at the same time as basic essential hospital services** (i.e., clinical management of rape and mental health support) **are facing disruption** by resources being switched to COVID-19 cases.

<sup>3</sup> The UNODC data base distinguishes between three Iraqi regions: Kurdistan Region, Central Iraq and Iraq. See Table 5, Annex II Statistical data.

Natural hazards such as climate change and the pandemic disproportionately affect women and girls because of their traditional responsibilities, including 75 % of home care-work. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has calculated that this burden, combined with the lockdowns, has erased decades of progress in female labour force participation. **Planetary change is disempowering for women** (UNDP, 2020).

The pandemic's outbreak has resulted in an increased level of complexity in managing VAWG cases, as well as fluctuations in the level of emergency calls to helplines and shelters, depending on local and domestic context. **For example:**

- In Cyprus and Singapore helplines received 30 % more calls; in Argentina emergency calls increased by 25 %; in Australia 40 % of frontline workers reported increased requests for help; in Tunisia calls were 7 times higher than in the same months of the previous year.
- In Italy and France, by contrast, shelters reported a 55 % drop in calls. Over the first months of the 2020 lockdown, in countries such as Argentina, Israel, Italy and Turkey femicide cases were reportedly higher than in the previous year (Weil, 2020).
- In Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania the number of cases reported by grassroots organisations for 2020 were higher than the previous year.

### 3.3 Types of femicide

We can classify femicide cases into different types, according to: the perpetrator's behaviour; the relationship with victims; and the broader context of this crime's occurrence. **Context and gender are the two key determinants to look at when analysing femicide.**

1. **Intimate partner femicide.** This type is currently the best documented internationally. A woman is killed by her partner or former partner, very often in the context of a prior abusive relationship. Studies show that trying to escape from an abusive relationship, or seeking divorce or estrangement are events placing the woman at the highest risk of being killed by an intimate partner (Walby et al., 2017). The perpetrator's motivation is rooted in a sense of ownership over the victim, based on unequal and rigid gender stereotypes (Weil et al., 2018); sometimes the perpetrator is also emotionally incapable of conceiving life without her. In killings perpetrated by an intimate partner, 82 % of the victims are women, while 18 % are men (UNODC, 2018).
2. **Family (non-intimate) femicide.** Committed by family non-intimate relatives, this type can be subdivided into different forms:
  - **Femicide in the name of honour.** This is usually committed by relatives (including women), when the family considers that the victim's behaviour has transgressed rigid patriarchal norms, in a way that undermines the honour of a family. The victim is a young adult who refuses to marry the husband chosen by her family, or who has or is suspected of having pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relations. In some cases, the woman killed has been a prior rape or sexual assault victim. High numbers of femicide cases in the name of honour are documented in countries such as Afghanistan, India, Palestine, Tunisia (UNESCO, 2019), as well as in ethnic communities residing in various European and North American countries (Aujla and Gill, 2014; Heydari et al., 2021). Often this type of femicide remains unreported and unrecorded (UNODC, 2018).
  - **Dowry death.** As recently as 2019 in India, official statistics recorded more than 7 000 crimes against women as 'dowry deaths' and more than 5 000 'abetments to suicide' under the Indian Penal Code (National Crimes Records Bureau, 2019). In the social system of arranged marriages, 'dowry' is the money and valuables that the bride's family gives to the groom's family. Wives whose family of origin has allegedly not delivered the expected amount may be subject to lethal

domestic violence, such as arson. These practices remain embedded in the cultures of many South-Asian countries (UNODC, 2018). Dowry customs are also perpetuated through the traditional preference for a male child, which affects: the country sex ratio; female infanticide rates; and the status of women who give birth to daughters.

- **Femicide-suicide.** Intentional murder of a woman followed by the perpetrator's suicide is an incident reported in almost all European countries, as well as Australia, Ghana, Moldova, Turkey, the United States (US) (Balica, 2016) and South Africa. Research in Romania detailed the characteristics of this incident: up to 67 % of all femicide-suicide cases are committed by male intimate partners and up to 97 % of cases by relatives; almost 50 % are committed in the victim's house, after she has been divorced from her would-be perpetrator. When she has children, in 30 % of the cases they are also targeted by the perpetrator (Balica, 2016). This type of femicide is insufficiently recorded and highlights the need to focus on special preventative measures for perpetrators with mental health problems and adult women walking out of violent and abusive relationships, a time when the risk of femicide is very high.
3. **Femicide in war and conflict settings.** During times of war, genocide and armed conflict, the systematic targeting of women and mass rape are employed to annihilate local communities and humiliate opponents. Victims of rape may subsequently be marginalised and killed. The Academic Council on the United Nations System reports femicide in conflict settings as diverse as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, ISIS groups and Rwanda (ACUNS, 2015). UNODC has recognised that 'these unrecorded gender-based killings of women and girls may substantially elevate the global number of [femicide] victims' (UNODC, 2018).
  4. **Female sex selection.** In 1990, Nobel prize laureate Amartya Sen called international attention to the fact that more than 100 million women were missing globally, because of female pre- and post-natal sex selection occurring in countries of Asia and North Africa, as well as, to a lesser extent, Latin America. More recently, researchers have estimated that the number rose steadily to 126 million by 2010, with China and India accounting for most of the sex ratio deficit at birth. The United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) points to the deliberate elimination of girls and women through infanticide, starvation and neglect rooted in an ingrained gender discrimination, in other words a preference for sons over daughters. Post-natal excess female mortality is now increasing even faster and will possibly reach 150 million by 2035 (Bongaarts and Guilimoto, 2015).
  5. **Witch-hunting.** Journalists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) report how more than 200 people, mostly women, have died from witch-hunting in rural areas of Assam (India) over the last 20 years. The killing of witches is also practised *inter alia* in Nepal, the Pacific Islands and Tanzania. While men who practise traditional healing are held in high regard, women may be hunted, ultimately facing violence and eventually death. The government of Assam passed a Bill against witch-hunting in 2018 and NGOs now report that the number of deaths is slowly decreasing. Superstition is not the only reason for witch-hunting, with both young and older women being targeted when they acquire land/property. Assam activists report that most of them are single, assertive and 'dare to say no'.
  6. **Other types, in a human rights-based approach.** The intentional killing of women as a result of gender discrimination also occurs in other contexts, which emerge if we take a [human rights-based approach](#) to femicide, that is if we look at the most marginalised and excluded women. By way of example, in 2018 the number of detected victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution was 49 032 globally. For every ten victims, five were adult women and two were girls (UNODC, 2020), many of whom have disappeared, are unregistered and thus fall into the 'obscure figure of femicide' (see Fig. 2 above). Women belonging to ethnic minorities and aboriginal groups may be discriminated against because of their ethnicity, language and religion. They may face additional barriers because they are women, thus in greater risk of: starvation; not having access to appropriate health care; or being killed

by strangers. More precise information on the share of femicides in these cases would undoubtedly increase the annual femicide rate, but this could be compiled only piecemeal, by cross-referencing a myriad of official reports and grey literature.

### 3.4 The UN Femicide Watch

Collecting, analysing and sharing data is crucial for investigating and prosecuting cases of femicide, as well as designing evidence-based policies that can effectively prevent potential victims from being at risk.

In 2013 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted [Resolution A/RES/68/191](#), expressing its deep concern over the alarming share of gender-related killings involving women. For the first time, this issue was placed at the highest level on the UN Agenda, urging Member States to exercise due diligence in strengthening their criminal justice response to this crime. Three years later, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women called for a **Femicide Watch, an initiative focusing on prevention through the collection of data at national level**. She proposed that states, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, collect and publish femicide data annually, disaggregated by the age, sex and ethnicity of perpetrators as well as victims and indicating perpetrator/victim relationship. Information on the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators and identification of failures to protect with a view to developing further preventive measures should also be included. In carrying out these activities, governments were encouraged to involve civil society, academia and victims' representatives in their activity.

Since 2016, the Femicide Watch has stimulated interest in data collection. Governments have supported the establishment of national observatories on femicide and/or violence against women and girls in cooperation with stakeholders, also as an opportunity to raise awareness. In some countries, grass roots associations and researchers have created independent observatories, combining information from different sources, including the media (Annex I provides examples).

In 2017, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), when updating its guidance on violence against women<sup>4</sup>, also provided support for the UN Special Rapporteur's initiative. It recommended *inter alia* that data on violence against women should be disaggregated by type of violence, relationship between the victim/survivor and the perpetrator. Data analysis should enable the identification of failures in protection and serve to improve preventive measures, 'which should, if necessary, include the establishment or designation of observatories for the collection of administrative data on the gender-based killings of women, also referred to as 'femicide' or 'femicide', and attempted killings of women'<sup>5</sup>.

## 4 Determinants and facilitating factors

**There is no single cause for femicide.** Researchers who investigate violence have moved from grand theories to a multi-level 'ecological approach', where aspects belonging to different levels of social life come together in different ways, depending on norms and socially accepted behaviours in local contexts (Brankovic, 2019). **Femicide results from the complex interaction of risk factors**, characterising the condition and behaviour of persons involved, how they relate to each other, the presence or lack of dedicated services (such as risk assessment centres, safe houses, trained police officials, etc.), as well as the dominant representation of male and female roles in society. Downgrading the status of women in local society is an obstacle to their empowerment (Bandelli and Corradi, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, [General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19](#), CEDAW/C/GC/35, 26 July 2017.

<sup>5</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2017, p. 18.

## 4.1 Risk factors

Table 1 below summarises the most relevant risk factors, namely the most frequent drivers of femicide observed across societies, for both perpetrators and victims. Risk factors are listed at four levels: individual, interpersonal, community and society.

**Table 1. Most relevant risk factors for becoming a perpetrator and a victim of femicide**

Level	For perpetrating femicide	For being a victim of femicide
<b>Individual</b>	Abuse of alcohol and drugs Violating protection order Mental health problems  Witnessing domestic abuse in family of origin Unemployment	Attempted strangulation Being a rape victim Pregnancy (during a violent relationship) Witnessing domestic abuse in family of origin Low level of education
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Prior violence against partner Obsessive jealousy Coercive control over partner	Prior violence by perpetrator Estrangement, divorce Presence of child from previous relationship Conflict with in-laws (over dowry, land property, behaviour)
<b>Community</b>	Celebration of aggressive masculinity (as in <i>macho</i> culture) Loose social ties in neighbourhoods	Devaluation of women's roles Isolation Lack of multi-agency coordination for victims' protection Patterns of behaviour transgressing gender norms (in patriarchal settings)
<b>Society</b>	Perception of impunity Lack of measures redressing gender inequality War and conflict settings	Low access to justice Lack of women's rights recognition  War and conflict settings

Source: author's original elaboration, adapted and updated from WHO (2012)

For perpetrators, the drivers of femicide at **an individual level** include: abuse of alcohol and drugs; violating a protection order issued after being convicted for domestic violence; mental health problems (frequently observed in femicide-suicide, when the perpetrator kills himself after murdering the victim); together with unemployment, which increases strain and instability. For victims, the most likely risks of being killed include: attempted strangulation (the victim's highest risk factor of all); pregnancy during a violent relationship; being a victim of rape (and thus being targeted as 'dishonoured'); and having low educational levels, which increases the victim's social vulnerability. Witnessing domestic abuse in the family of origin is a risk factor for both perpetrator and victim.

A couple's history of prior violence is the most frequently observed risk factor at **an interpersonal level**, which also includes the perpetrator's obsessive jealousy and coercive control over a partner (on money, behaviour, contacts with friends) and the victim's estrangement or divorce from her abusive partner. Conflict with in-laws (over property, dowry and behaviour which does not comply with set gender rules) and presence of a child from a former relationship may put the woman at higher risk.

At **the level of community life**, celebration of aggressive masculinity and, reciprocally, devaluation of women's roles are the most important risk factors. The loosening of social ties in neighbourhoods (because



of migration, displacement, or downward mobility) decreases social control over violent behaviour and increases the isolation of vulnerable victims. When women living in very traditional communities transgress patriarchal norms defining gender behaviour and sexual life, and at the same time the community lacks protection services, they may be at a high risk of femicide.

At **the broader societal level**, perceived impunity increases the likelihood of becoming a perpetrator without fear of consequences. Vulnerability of victims is higher when they have low access to justice and public measures to close the gender inequality gap are lacking. Living in war and conflict settings presents risk factors on both sides; in the resultant dramatic disruption of social life, women are targeted as very vulnerable subjects.

Gun policy regulation does not seem to affect rates of femicide, except in the United States (Stamatel et al., 2020).

## 4.2 Gender inequality and femicide

There is consensus on the impact of gender inequality on VAWG. In general, when the former decreases, so does the latter. However, if we look at this connection from a cross-national perspective, mixed results are revealed that need to be considered when designing prevention policies at a national level.

A study of 33 European countries compared the impact of gender inequality on femicide rates over three decades, focussing on differences between Western and Eastern Europe. The study concluded that gender dynamics operate in two almost opposing ways: women's take up of less traditional gender roles increases their risk of becoming victims of femicide; conversely, the collective improvement of women's status in society reduces this risk. **In countries with very traditional social systems, women's empowerment** (i.e., abandoning traditional roles, entering the labour market albeit with insecure positions, increasing estrangement and divorce) **can become a risk factor, while political and legal reforms concerning women's collective status in society are a protective factor** (Stamatel, 2014).

The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey showed that high rates of VAWG persist in Northern European countries which have the highest gender equality indices in the world. Researchers have explained this apparent contradiction. **While gender equality is important, it does not explain VAWG straightforwardly** (Ivert et al., 2019); **to explain gender-based violence, other relevant factors than gender indexes must also be considered at individual and interpersonal levels**, such as: experience of physical and sexual abuse in childhood; educational achievement; drinking behaviour patterns; and the quality of neighbourhood social ties (Ivert, et al., 2019).

In other regions of the world, a cross-national comparison has never been attempted, but this mixed dynamic, involving different levels at the same time, may apply elsewhere. In order to reduce femicide, supporting women's empowerment with policies targeted at closing the gender gap should be complemented by appropriate measures for the protection of victims at risk because, as women's behaviour changes, they may be exposed to higher risk with a negative impact on femicide victimisation. **Policies designed at the level of society** (Table 1) **must always be braced with locally designed interventions at individual, interpersonal and community levels** (Table 1), such as *inter alia*: centres and safe houses; increased access to justice; along with special training for police and medical staff.

## 5 Economic and social impact

In 2016, Lakshmi Puri (Deputy Executive Director of UN Women) declared: '[...] **the cost of violence against women is estimated at 2 % of global GDP**. This is equivalent to USD 1.5 trillion, approximately, the size of the economy of Canada' (UN Women, 2016). The economic costs of not ending VAWG are substantial, with broader costs attributed to the delivery of services to victims (including health, legal, social and specialised), along with other costs related to the criminal justice response and negative impact on

women's participation to education and the workforce. Any direct impact is borne by individuals, close relatives and children who experience trauma, as well as negative repercussions regarding: physical and mental wellbeing; presence at work/school; acquisition of skills; and income. **For example:**

- In 2013, a comparative study in a mixture of nine high, medium and low-income countries estimated the economic costs of intimate partner violence at 1-2 % of national GDP, almost equalling government spending on primary education (Duvvury, et al., 2013).
- In Ghana, the scale of economic losses was approximately 65 million days annually, equivalent to 4.5 % of employable women not actually working. Calculating only the time missed in paid work, households lost nearly USD 286 million in 2018. Researchers estimated that 300 000 school days were missed annually by the victims' children (ISSER et al., 2019).
- In Tanzania, the difference in earnings between abused and non-abused women amounted to 1.22 % of the country's GDP. In Nicaragua the difference in earnings amounted to 1.60 %, in Vietnam 1.78 % and in Chile 2.00 % (Vyas, 2013).
- Other evidence gathered estimated the annual costs of all intimate partner violence cases for victims at: USD 1.2 million in Uganda; USD 17.5 million (rural areas) and USD 6.14 million (urban areas) in Bangladesh; and USD 6.6 million in Morocco. When compared to the countries' income levels, these amounts are extremely high. Overall, the use of services by victims was low when set against the number of reported injuries (ISSER et al., 2009).

There are some clear social and economic consequences of inaction in recognising the global magnitude of femicide, but **the femicide-related share of VAWG has never been calculated, nor have the economic costs of femicide's consequences on the surviving children.** The surviving children of femicide victims experience long-lasting effects, often forcing them to leave home and adapt to new environments. A study conducted in 10 US cities found that very often the child is exposed to domestic violence and abuse prior to the mother's death, but little or no interventions are devoted to these children (Lewandowski et al., 2004).

**COVID-19 is likely to increase the figures above.** As suggested by management of other major epidemics, for instance Ebola and Zika, in different countries the most vulnerable groups of women are placed at higher risk and associated costs escalate accordingly.

## 6 Recommendations

In the context of external action, the EU has undertaken considerable investment for women's empowerment and gender equality at national levels, as well as boosting synergies at regional levels. In the EU Gender Action Plan III as well as its corresponding objectives and indicators (EC and HR/VP, 2020a; 2020b), gender-based violence is a key thematic area of engagement, in seeking to increase protection, prevention and prosecution, thereby contributing to actions in response to VAWG. The Spotlight Initiative is an unprecedented commitment to fighting VAWG in third countries; when the third country governments, or at least local activists, mobilise against it, Spotlight is ready to support their action against femicide (Spotlight Initiative, 2019). Within this highly relevant framework, femicide (as opposed to general homicide) should not only be mentioned as one possible form of VAWG, but also as a crime in need of specific global recognition and prevention, through the use of a human rights-based approach that focuses on women who are most marginalised or excluded.

The typology under Section 3.3 sheds light on the common condition of many women in the world. Victims of femicide are not weak or unable to look after themselves; often, they are the backbones of their families and communities. Femicide very often occurs as the final step in a process of marginalisation, deprivation, isolation, starvation or abuse. Policy recommendations here reconnect to the characteristics of this crime.



- **Call on third countries to establish femicide as a priority in their political agenda and public discourse including, but not limited to, policies for prevention of VAWG.**

Awareness of VAWG is gaining prominence in a great majority of third countries. In this context, the concept of femicide should be clearly adopted in official documents and awareness-raising campaigns, because it requires specific measures to combat and prevent it. It should be included in programmes concerning the prevention of VAWG and women's empowerment, as well as being highlighted in official data collection for statistical purposes.

- **Call on the Commission to include femicide prevention as one of the Spotlight Initiative's key goals.**

In Latin America, the Spotlight programme already comprises action against femicide. This should stand out in every country under the Initiative, as the most severe form of gender-based violence.

- **Hold public hearings and exchanges of views with civil society organisations actively involved in femicide prevention. Organise visits in selected countries in the area of European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as Africa and Asia.**

Calling on governments' responsibility to prevent femicide and prosecute perpetrators is essential. However, as democratic governments change, effective public action can result only from constant grassroots lobbying. Involving civil society organisations in awareness-raising (such as women's movements, the media, the business community, lawyers' associations) is key. Reducing femicide requires a cultural shift towards more equal gender roles and such a shift will occur only with long-lasting political action.

- **Include men's associations as stakeholders in femicide prevention.**

Approximately 90 % of femicide perpetrators are men and hence decreasing the number of women killed will not happen without their active involvement. Programmes for prevention of VAWG and femicide in particular, should always **include men's associations** and incorporate, *inter alia*: public recognition of femicide as a gendered crime; participation in awareness raising campaigns; as well as training in community support for victims and perpetrators at risk. In the countries of Northern Europe and North America, men's associations have also promoted rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators, a policy which could also be adopted in other regions of the world.

- **Support the establishment of local 'Femicide Watch' or Observatory in third countries.**

The 'Femicide Watch' or establishment of a local observatory has proved to be a good starting point for awareness raising. However, this must not be taken as an isolated initiative but rather bring together different actors committed to working together, including local governments, women's associations and other stakeholders (Annex I offers examples). Promotion of local Observatories could be undertaken in partnership with the UN, comprising certain basic requirements: (a) identifying a small and clear set of common indicators, to ensure comparability; (b) minimum technical requirements (such as templates and ICT); together with (c) investment in training and multi-agency cooperation. **Existing observatories generate many activities** beyond data collection, such as: assessment of victims' risk; social media campaigns; lobbying; and research. In many countries, mortuary data is registered on a regular basis, but it is neither gender-sensitive nor channelled to statistical offices. As prevention must take place in a time/space very close to both victims and perpetrators who are at risk, detailed information is necessary to design effective policies.

- **Promote aggregation of femicide data in one international repository.**

In recent decades, case-studies, surveys, interviews and data on femicide have been produced within sociology, criminology, international and regional bodies (such as the United Nations, World Health

Organisation, Council of Europe, European Union, Pan American Health Organisation, among others), as well grassroots groups. Whilst this body of knowledge is presently very large, it is also extremely fragmented and dispersed across an array of sources. The UN Femicide Watch [has stimulated national and regional initiatives](#), but is not currently aiming at building a global platform<sup>6</sup>. As observatories multiply locally, there is an increased need to acquire a broad understanding of femicide globally. Among high-income regions, **Europe has been at the forefront of research and action to counter femicide**, thus having legitimacy to convene or lead a multiple partnership **for the creation of an international repository**, whose aim would be to collect, organise and share **quantitative** as well as **qualitative** information and assemble it regularly into a comprehensive picture.

In scientific and everyday language, new concepts appear which designate new phenomena. 'Femicide' has brought together, in a single term, aspects of the condition of women across the world that had hitherto been regarded as distinct. The fact that 'femicide' is not a universally accepted terminology should not be seen as a hindrance towards recognising the violation of some of the most basic human rights, namely life, liberty and personal security.

<sup>6</sup> In 2021, [UN Women and UNODC have launched a global consultation](#) on a common statistical framework on gender-related killings, based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes. One year ago, the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics issued a [Final Evaluation Report](#) and the framework will be presented in the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the United National Statistical Commission in March 2022.

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## Annex I – Profiles of selected countries

Country profiles provide at-a-glance information on public recognition, data collection and women's activism to prevent femicide. The following list of countries is not intended to be exhaustive, but merely illustrative of geographical variation. They were selected according to EU engagement and priorities, as well as size and global economic relevance, availability or lack of information and (with some exceptions) 'appetite for change', in other words degree of involvement of government and/or grass-roots organisations in reducing VAWG, which could be the basis for further action on femicide.

Indexes source: UNDP, *The Next Frontier. Human Development and the Anthropocene*, Human Development Report 2020. Human Development Index, p. 411, and Gender Inequality Index, pp. 361-364.

### EUROPE/EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>			
Human Development Index	73/189	Gender Inequality Index	38/162
<p>In 2013-2017 researchers from BiH participated in the COST Action 'Femicide across Europe'. In 2019, the project 'Raising Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutional capacity to prevent and combat violence against women' was initiated with support from the Council of Europe; establishing a system of femicide data collection and analysis is an important part of the project. In 2020, a report funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency stated that 1/3 of murder victims are previously abused women and their deaths are often followed by perpetrators' suicide. In the same year, the Gender Equality Agency of BiH established a 'Femicide Watch', as a response to the invitation of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women.</p>			

<b>Georgia</b>			
Human Development Index	61/189	Gender Inequality Index	76/162
<p>In 2013 the Georgian government recognised femicide as a violation of women's rights. The term 'femicide' entered public discourse following wide media coverage of a sensational murder case in 2014.</p> <p>In 2016-2019, the EU NEAR Instrument provided funding for the project 'Tracking Violent Crime against Women', coordinated by the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA), in cooperation with the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) and journalists. The project goal was to collect and disseminate stories, data and legal response on femicide in the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The project increased the capacity of journalists and lawyers to recognise and respond to femicide incidents <a href="http://www.femicide.ge">www.femicide.ge</a></p> <p>The motive of gender discrimination in the investigation of a femicide case was identified for the first time in Georgia in 2020. Progress was made in relation to obtaining data on femicide; however, the key players on femicide – the GYLA, the GIPA, the Public Defender's office, and UN women – recommend that further steps are taken towards data collection and prevention.</p>			

<b>Israel</b>			
Human Development Index	19/189	Gender Inequality Index	26/162
<p>In 2013-2017 a researcher from Israel chaired the COST Action 'Femicide across Europe' in which other Israeli researchers also participated. Israeli scholars have been prominent in publishing articles on different aspects of femicide in a multi-ethnic society. Since 2020, the independent Israeli Observatory</p>			

on Femicide collects and analyses data, reporting on relatively few femicide cases per annum compared to other countries with similar populations (21 cases in 2020, 10 until Sept. 2021). The Observatory has received letters of support from the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the President of Israel. <https://en.israelfemicide.org>

<b>Morocco</b>			
Human Development Index	121/189	Gender Inequality Index	111/162
<p>With the adoption of a new constitution in 2011, Morocco introduced the principle of equal treatment for men and women and in 2014 it repealed penal code provisions for shotgun weddings in cases of abuse and rape, a shortcoming that had often led to femicide and honour-related killings. It was only thanks to the action of women-led NGOs, such as the <i>Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale</i> (AMPF), that a new law was approved in 2018 which criminalises forced marriages and introduces more severe penalties for perpetrators. However, the law is less restrictive than intended by AMPF, as it does not define domestic violence, resulting in a lack of preventive measures concerning femicide. Since 2014, the government established the National Observatory on Violence against Women which provides comprehensive data on female killings. The most recent data indicate 117 intentional female homicides committed in 2019, a sharp increase of 24 % compared with the previous year.</p> <p>There is recent interest from local media towards femicide by an intimate partner, revealing a growing sense of criticism towards traditional gender stereotypes.</p>			

<b>Tunisia</b>			
Human Development Index	95/189	Gender Inequality Index	65/162
<p>In recognising women’s rights, the new 2014 Tunisian Constitution is one of the most advanced among Arab countries; women’s groups, that had actively participated in the 2011 revolution, were involved in drafting the new text. In 2017, the Parliament passed its Organic Law for the elimination of violence against women and in 2020 it established the Observatory on violence against women, which includes the Femicide Watch. In responding to the UN Special Rapporteur, the government is proposing to abolish ‘crimes of honour’. In such a progressive context, the crime of femicide is not recognised and very rarely mentioned.</p>			

<b>Turkey</b>			
Human Development Index	54/189	Gender Inequality Index	68/162
<p>Data on femicide in Turkey is collected by the national agency of statistics, independent organisations and NGOs. It presents some notable gaps at national level and sometimes fails to report all femicide cases. To close this gap, organisations such as the <i>Umut Foundation</i> have worked towards creating statistical data on femicide. This undertaking has been carried out through a systematic mapping of femicide cases, achieved by tracing events in the daily press. There are many women’s rights campaigns and rallies against femicide in the country. One example is the protest in July 2020 against the murder of a girl by her former boyfriend. According to <i>We Will Stop Femicide</i>, one of the leading organisations in Turkey, the number of femicides in the country has increased over the last decade. As recently as 2019, 473 women were murdered, followed by a further 527 in 2020. In August 2020, Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention on violence against women, making it more difficult for the</p>			

action of women's movements. This has also resulted in a lack of international binding measures to refer to both for femicide cases and their prevention.

## AFRICA

<b>Kenya</b>			
Human Development Index	143/189	Gender Inequality Index	126/162
<p>Although the government has launched a plan to end all forms of gender-based violence, no official statistics on femicide are available. In 2021, the Nairobi Office of the women's rights organisation 'Equality Now', in partnership with feminist and women's associations, submitted a report on femicide to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. They registered 161 femicide cases in the previous two years, provided detailed information on selected cases and urged government action on prevention and accurate data collection. <a href="https://www.equalitynow.org">https://www.equalitynow.org</a></p> <p>In 2020, the pan African feminist network FEMNET lobbied the African Union Chairperson about taking action against femicide. A grassroots Facebook initiative collects femicide data relying on media reports. The Kenyan chapter of the Federation of Women Lawyers is also very active in protecting victims of violence.</p>			

<b>South Africa</b>			
Human Development Index	114/189	Gender Inequality Index	93/162
<p>In 2018, responding to the UN, the Department of Justice established the first Femicide Watch of the African continent, which also includes services for risk assessment and a safety plan for victims of intimate partner violence. In 2018, the Department of Justice reported that the murder rate for women had increased drastically by 117 % between 2016 and 2017, at the same time as the rate for men was also increasing. <a href="https://www.justice.gov.za/vg/femicide/docs.html">https://www.justice.gov.za/vg/femicide/docs.html</a></p> <p>Femicide data is also collected by the South African Police Service. A thriving web of grassroots and women's associations participate in advocacy and prevention programmes, organise protests and social media campaigns.</p> <p>Researchers found that every eight hours a woman is killed by her male partner and one child in three experiences some forms of physical abuse. In 2020, in a televised address during the COVID-19 lockdown, President C. Ramaphosa described 'the killing of women and children by men' as the country's second pandemic.</p>			

<b>Tanzania (United Republic of)</b>			
Human Development Index	163/189	Gender Inequality Index	140/162
<p>The Legal and Human Rights Centre collects data on femicide through a programme called 'human rights monitoring'. The 2020 Human Rights Report records 32 intimate partner femicides and 189 witchcraft-related killings, mostly elderly women.</p> <p><a href="https://www.humanrights.or.tz">https://www.humanrights.or.tz</a></p>			



A local NGO, Agape Aids Control Programme, collaborates with Help Age (Tanzania) to end false accusations by working with traditional healers who agree that, when pressed to name witches for whatever reason, they target marginalised women.

<https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/womens-rights-in-tanzania/womens-rights-in-tanzania/>

## ASIA

<b>China</b>			
Human Development Index	85/189	Gender Inequality Index	39/162
<p>With very rapid economic development and urbanisation, Chinese traditional values and family structures have undergone great changes, but there is very scant information on VAWG and femicide. A few empirical studies emphasise a high increase of female victimisation by spouses and extra-marital intimate partners. Published research highlights differences between China and other countries of the world: low or very low socio-economic status of the femicide perpetrator, no former abuse in the couple, dissatisfaction with marriage as the perpetrator's motivation. A wife's murder of her long-term abusive husband is not infrequent, but most of the domestic abuse cases go unrecorded.</p> <p>No official information or data on femicide is available from official sources. The 2014 Shadow Report on CEDAW by the Chinese Women's NGOs states that awareness of VAWG is generally inadequate.</p>			

<b>India</b>			
Human Development Index	131/189	Gender Inequality Index	123/162
<p>Every year, the National Crimes Record Bureau collects and disseminates statistics regarding 'crimes against women' as classified by the Indian Penal Code. The latter includes 'murder with rape/gang murder', 'dowry death', 'abetment to suicide of women', as well as non-lethal incidents such as 'acid attack', 'cruelty by husband or his relatives', several types of kidnapping, and so on. The National Crimes Record Bureau does not record femicide or intimate partner murder.</p> <p>India has a rich web of women's associations, some of which were established as early as 1995, in the preparatory process for the Beijing World Conference. Many of them manage campaigns and services to prevent femicide, such as dowry deaths, witchcraft and sorcery burning, as well as intimate partner violence. Some of the largest associations have a long tradition of cooperation with parliamentarians and local governments in providing expert consultancy and assessing schemes for prevention of gender-based violence.</p>			

<b>Nepal</b>			
Human Development Index	142/189	Gender Inequality Index	110/162
<p>Nepal has taken significant action to reduce VAWG, including adoption of a new Constitution in 2015 which provides a legal framework for women's rights. In 2018 the UN Special Rapporteur urged the country to establish a Femicide Watch and to 'focus on the preventable gender-related killings', standing at approx. 1/3 of the total intentional murders. Accusations of witchcraft, the preference of sons over daughters, trafficking of women and girls are also contexts at very high risk of female victimisation.</p> <p>Lively women's NGOs exist in the country since the early '90s, and are active in reduction of gender inequality. Femicide is not included in their programmes.</p>			

## LATIN AMERICA

<b>Argentina</b>			
Human Development Index	46/189	Gender Inequality Index	75/162
<p>Argentina is among the 12 countries in Latin America (along with Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay) that integrates the crime of femicide in its penal code (Law 26.791 in Argentina). The Women's Office of the Supreme Court of the Nation manages the 'Official national femicide registry' which collects data on femicide rates on an annual basis.</p> <p><a href="https://www.csjn.gov.ar/omrecopilacion/omfemicidio/homefemicidio.html">https://www.csjn.gov.ar/omrecopilacion/omfemicidio/homefemicidio.html</a></p> <p>Argentina is the first country in the region to indicate not only the gender of the victim, but also: ethnic identity, disabilities, type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and whether there were any judicial or preventive measures in place at the time of the murder.</p> <p>In 2020, according to the organisation MuMaLá, there was one femicide every 32 hours: a total of 270 femicides took place in the country.</p> <p><a href="https://www.mumala.ar/observatorio/">https://www.mumala.ar/observatorio/</a></p>			

<b>Brazil</b>			
Human Development Index	84/189	Gender Inequality Index	95/162
<p>In 2015, Brazil approved <i>Lei do Femicídio</i> (Femicide Law), which increased the penalty for perpetrators: the minimum sentence for this crime raised from 6 to 12 years and the maximum from 20 to 30 years. Since 2016, Brazilian Federal government abides by a Decree that clarifies the commitment of the Government to open access data. Nevertheless, the country does not provide official national information on femicides.</p> <p>Civil society organisations gather information and collect data on femicide all over the country. During the pandemic, especially in March and April 2020, femicides increased by 22 percent compared to the same period in 2019 (Mundosur, 2021). Thanks to the monitoring work of #Colabora, 'Um vírus e duas guerras' [One virus and two wars], it emerged that in 2020 the average rate for the country was 0.34 femicides per 100,000 women.</p> <p><a href="https://projetocolabora.com.br/especial/um-virus-e-duas-guerras/">https://projetocolabora.com.br/especial/um-virus-e-duas-guerras/</a></p>			

<b>Colombia</b>			
Human Development Index	83/189	Gender Inequality Index	101/162
<p>In spite of special legal provisions that are in place since 2015 (special law on <i>feminicidio</i> and related article of the penal code), the country rate is among the highest in the Latin American region. Official data from the Attorney General's Office reported 186 cases in 2020, and the <i>Observatorio feminicidios Colombia</i>, managed by a feminist network, reported a figure 170 higher % than official sources.</p> <p><a href="https://observatoriofeminicidioscolombia.org/index.php/seguimiento/boletin-nacional">https://observatoriofeminicidioscolombia.org/index.php/seguimiento/boletin-nacional</a></p>			

Other organisations collect data independently and cross-reference them with the Attorney General's Office, such as *Fundación Femicidios Colombia*, which reported 294 cases last year. Official data on femicide lacks clarity: this is deceptive and leads to the 'invisibility' of the victims and impunity.

<b>Mexico</b>			
Human Development Index	74/189	Gender Inequality Index	71/162
<p>The Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System updates official data on femicide on a monthly basis. <a href="https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp">https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp</a></p> <p>Mexico integrated into its legal and penal framework the codification and prosecution of <i>feminicidio</i>, especially after the sentence issued by Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the Campo Algodonero case in 2009; nevertheless, the country continues to have a very high rate of this crime. In 2020, official national data registered 948 femicides (aprox. 2.5 daily), whereas, the grass roots associations reported 11 femicides per day (Mundosur, 2021).</p>			

## Annex II – Statistical data

The UNODC database collects data from national authorities (through the United Nations Crime Trends Survey), national statistics offices and international bodies such as the World Health Organisation. The designation of sub-regions and the countries therein follows the classification by UNODC. Because differences exist among countries in the legal definition of intentional killing, as well as in the methodology for counting, recording and reporting rates, data comparison must be taken cautiously. The following tables list all countries for which recent data (i.e. not older than 2010) is available in the UNODC open access database (last accessed on November 2021).

**Table 2. Female victims of intentional killing per sub-regions of Africa**

Sub-Region	Count*	Rate - per 100 000 female population*
Northern Africa		
Algeria	73	0.37
Egypt	262	0.61
Morocco	117	0.64
Sub-Saharan Africa		
<i>Eastern Africa</i>		
Burundi	123	2.32
Kenya	437	1.69
Mauritius	14	2.18
Seychelles	2	5.39
Uganda	834	3.99
United Republic of Tanzania	671	2.60
<i>Middle Africa</i>		
Cameroon	107	0.89
<i>Southern Africa</i>		
South Africa	2 771	9.46
<i>Western Africa</i>		
Cabo Verde	10	3.69

Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019. \* The most recent year available.

**Table 3. Female victims of intentional killing per sub-regions of Oceania**

Sub-Region	Count*	Rate - per 100 000 female population*
Australia and New Zealand		
Australia	82	0.66
New Zealand	13	0.54
Melanesia		
Fiji	12	2.82
Polynesia		
Tonga	1	1.95

Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019. \* The most recent year available.

**Table 4. Female victims of intentional killing per sub-regions of the Americas**

Sub-Region	Count*	Rate - per 100,000 female population*
Latin America and the Caribbean		
<i>Caribbean</i>		
Antigua and Barbuda	3	6.02
Bahamas	6	3
Barbados	5	3.37
Cuba	121	2.12
Dominica	1	2.85
Dominican Republic	145	2.7
Grenada	1	1.8
Haiti	58	1.03
Jamaica	129	8.73
Puerto Rico	38	2.47
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2	7.39
Saint Lucia	4	4.33
Trinidad and Tobago	29	4.19
United States Virgin Islands	2	3.63
<i>Central America</i>		
Belize	17	8.67
Costa Rica	48	1.9
El Salvador	230	6.71
Guatemala	621	6.96
Honduras	394	8.08
Mexico	3 893	5.97
Nicaragua	53	1.6
Panama	52	2.45
<i>South America</i>		
Argentina	400	1.74
Bolivia	304	5.3
Brazil	3 728	3.47
Chile	93	0.97
Colombia	1,067	4.16
Ecuador	150	1.73
Guyana	18	4.62
Paraguay	54	1.56
Peru	631	3.3
Suriname	7	2.42
Uruguay	48	2.68
Venezuela	1 566	10.71
Northern America		
Canada	173	0.93
United States of America	2 991	1.8

Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019. \* The most recent year available.

**Table 5. Female victims of intentional killing per sub-regions of Asia**

Sub-Region	Count*	Rate - per 100,000 female population*
Central Asia		
Kazakhstan	221	2.37
Tajikistan	17	0.45
Uzbekistan	138	0.83
Eastern Asia		
China, Hong Kong SAR	13	0.32
Japan	181	0.28
Mongolia	41	2.51
Republic of Korea	154	0.6
South-eastern Asia		
Myanmar	39	0.14
Philippines	433	0.8
Singapore	5	0.18
Thailand	404	1.15
Southern Asia		
Afghanistan	153	0.85
Bhutan	1	0.28
India	17 483	2.66
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	224	0.59
Maldives	5	2.64
Sri Lanka	249	2.25
Western Asia		
Armenia	10	0.64
Azerbaijan	61	1.21
Cyprus	10	1.67
Georgia	19	0.91
Iraq	541	3.3
Iraq (Central Iraq)	531	3.57
Iraq (Kurdistan Region)	22	0.89
Israel	26	0.62
Jordan	33	0.68
Kuwait	10	0.71
Oman	6	0.35
Qatar	2	0.34
Saudi Arabia	42	0.3
State of Palestine	7	0.29
Turkey	445	1.05
United Arab Emirates	21	0.7

Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019. \* The most recent year available.

**Table 6. Female victims of intentional killing per sub-regions of Europe**

Sub-Region	Count*	Rate - per 100,000 female population*
Eastern Europe		
Belarus	87	1.72
Bulgaria	32	0.89
Czech Republic	39	0.72
Hungary	31	0.61
Poland	80	0.41
Republic of Moldova	43	2.04
Romania	71	0.71
Russian Federation	2 921	3.73
Slovakia	18	0.64
Ukraine	461	1.93
Northern Europe		
Denmark	27	0.93
Estonia	6	0.86
Finland	30	1.07
Ireland	8	0.33
Latvia	42	4.08
Lithuania	22	1.48
Norway	16	0.6
Sweden	25	0.5
United Kingdom	261	0.77
Southern Europe		
Albania	13	0.92
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10	0.59
Croatia	14	0.65
Greece	19	0.36
Italy	111	0.36
Malta	3	1.37
Montenegro	5	1.57
North Macedonia	4	0.38
Portugal	48	0.88
Serbia	29	0.65
Slovenia	4	0.38
Spain	126	0.53
Western Europe		
Austria	40	0.88
Belgium	81	1.42
France	285	0.85
Germany	276	0.65
Luxembourg	2	0.72
Netherlands	42	0.49
Switzerland	26	0.6

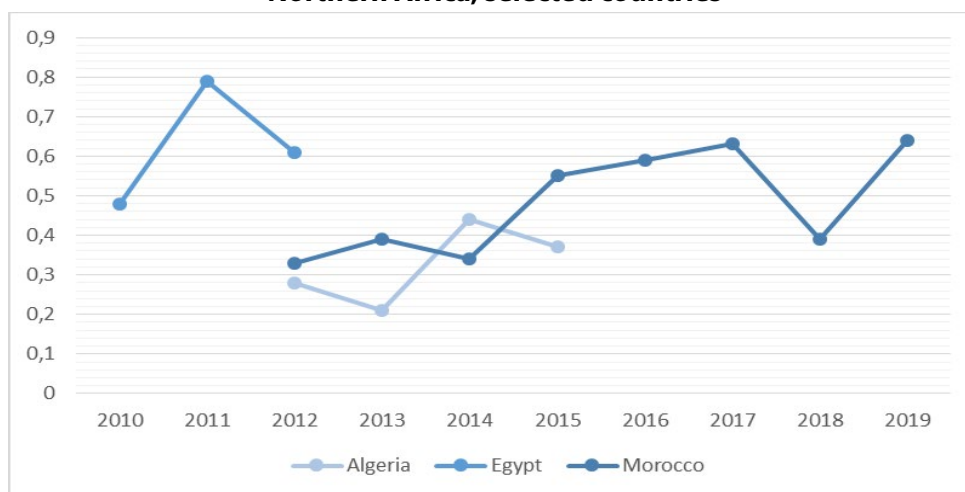
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019. \* The most recent year available.



**Figures 3-16. Trends in female intentional killing, rate (per 100,000 female population)**

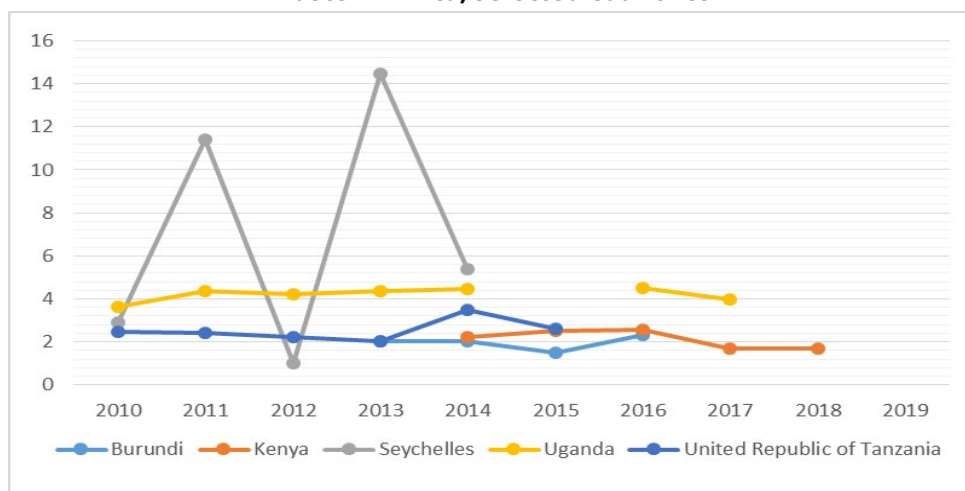
The following tables present trends in the rate of female intentional killings since 2014. When recent data were unavailable, the table goes back to 2010. Countries are selected depending on data availability and grouped in sub-regions of continents. They are listed in alphabetical order by continent: Africa, America, Asia, Europe.

**Northern Africa, selected countries**



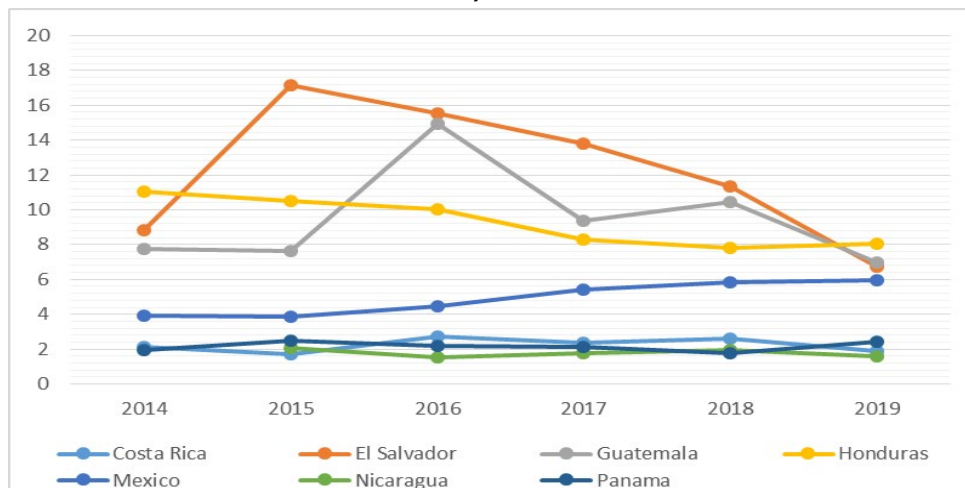
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

**Eastern Africa, selected countries**



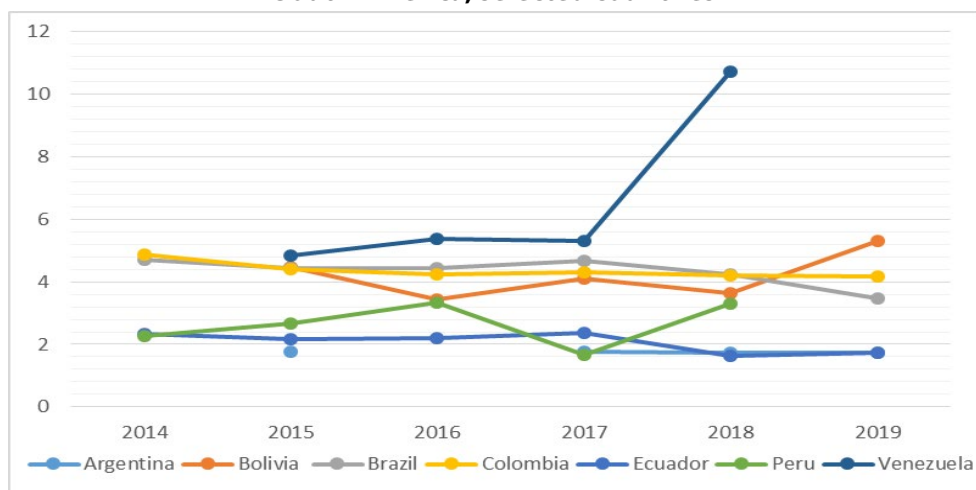
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Central America, selected countries



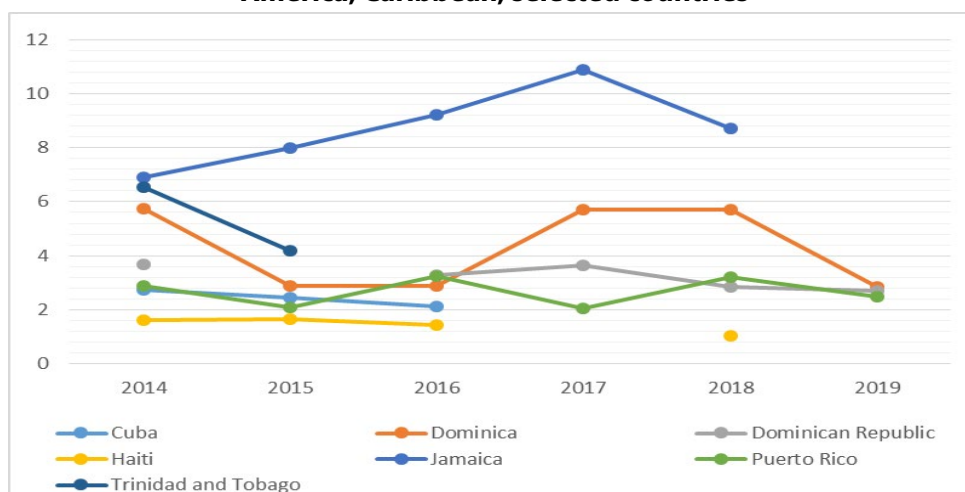
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### South America, selected countries



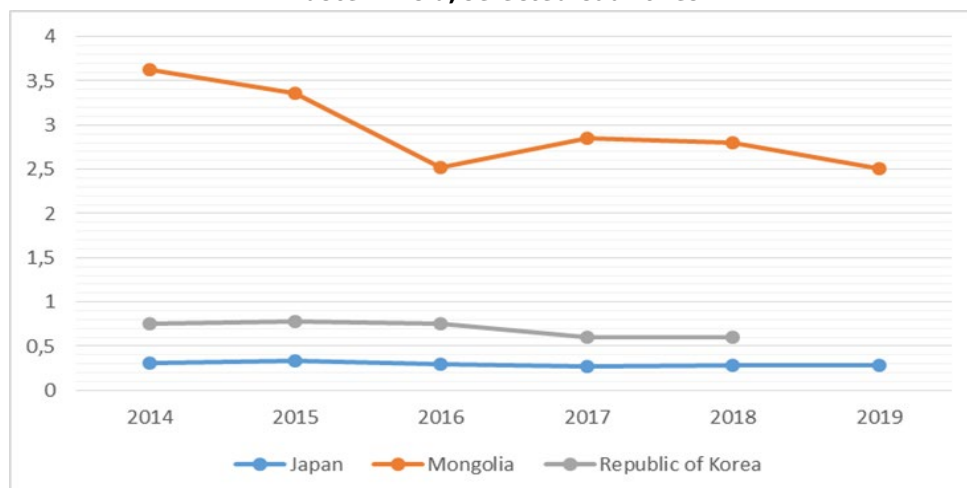
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### America, Caribbean, selected countries



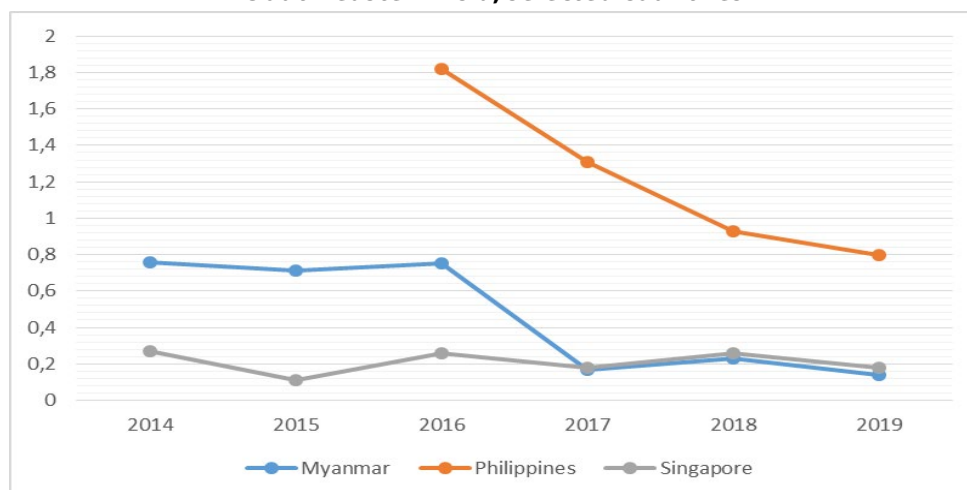
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Eastern Asia, selected countries



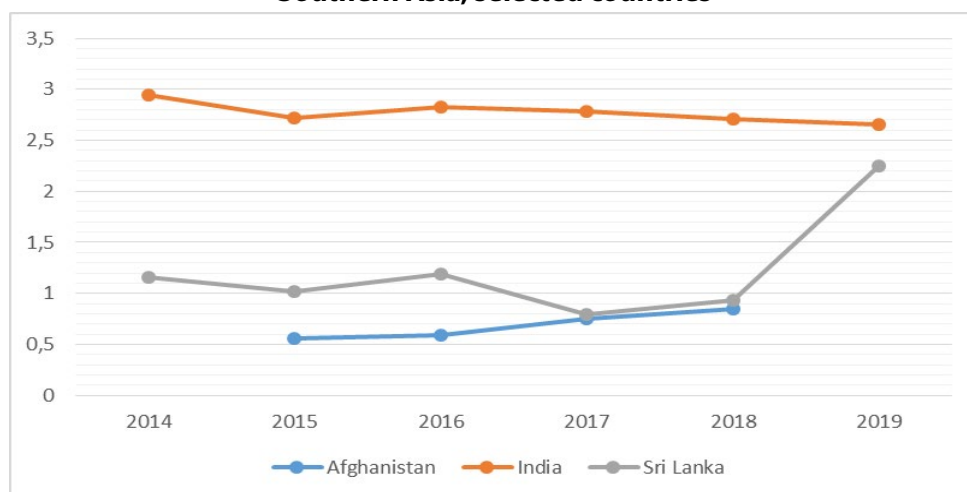
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### South-eastern Asia, selected countries



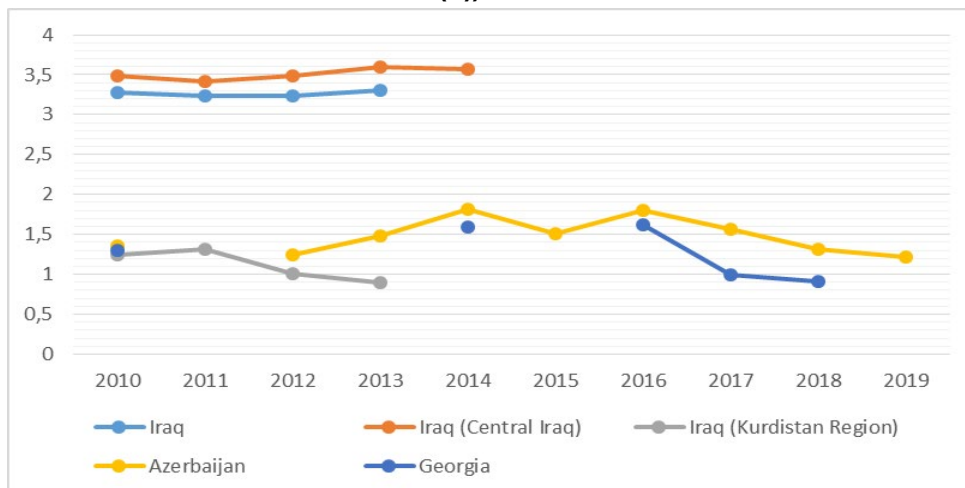
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Southern Asia, selected countries



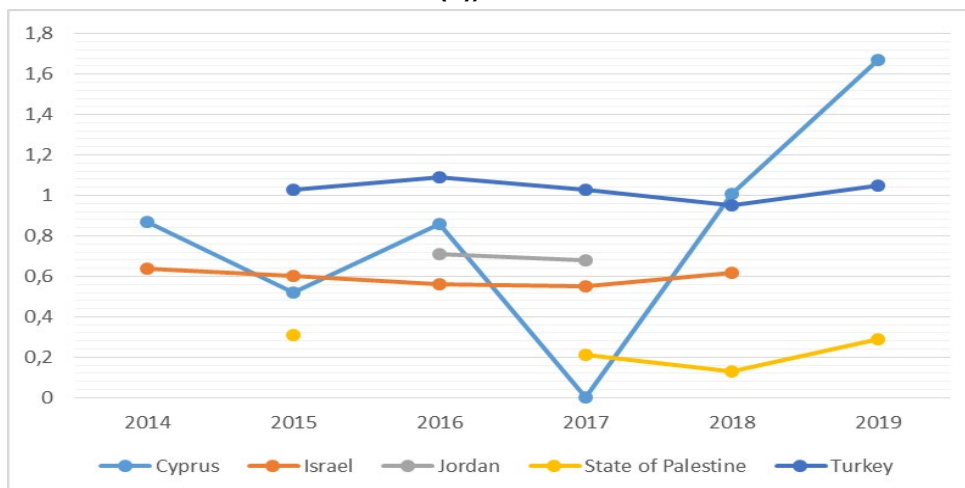
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Western Asia (1), selected countries



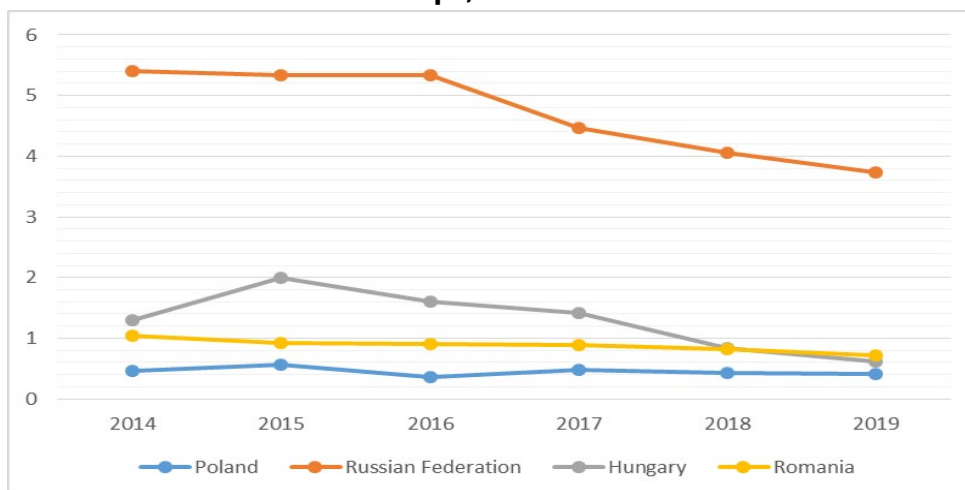
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Western Asia (2), selected countries



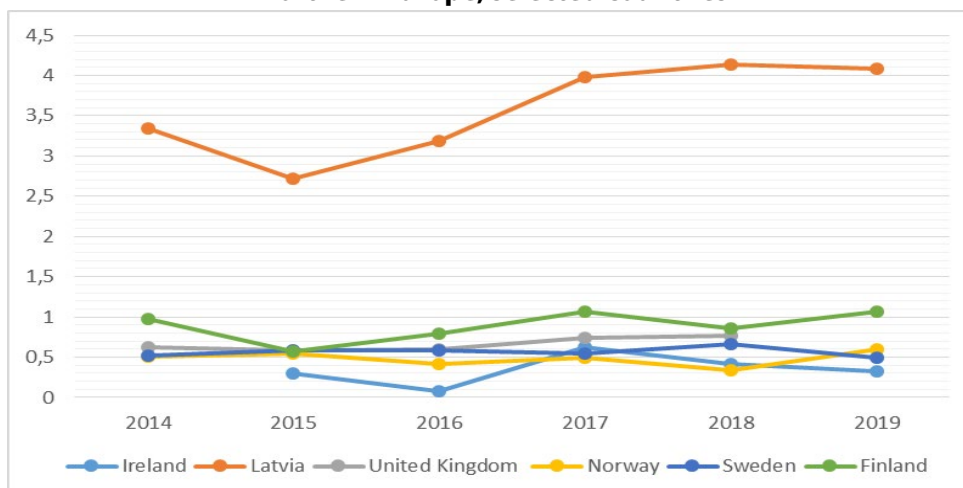
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Eastern Europe, selected countries



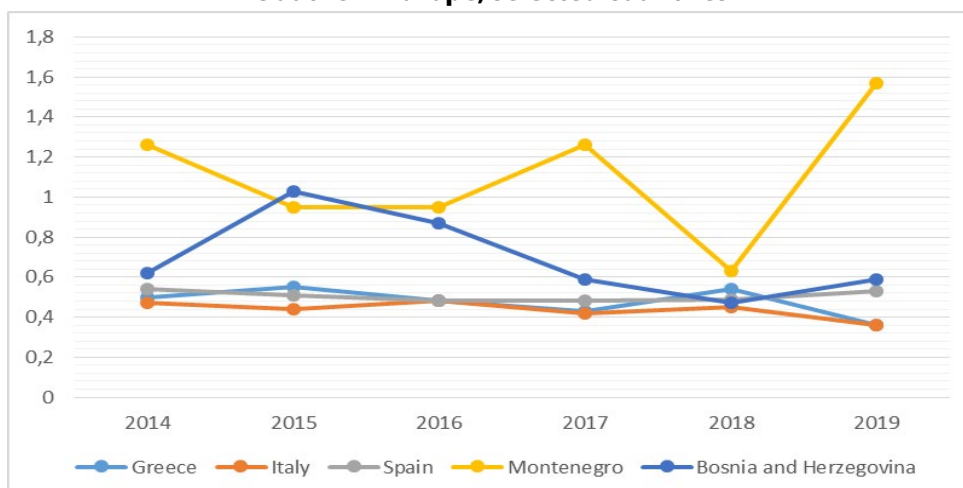
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Northern Europe, selected countries



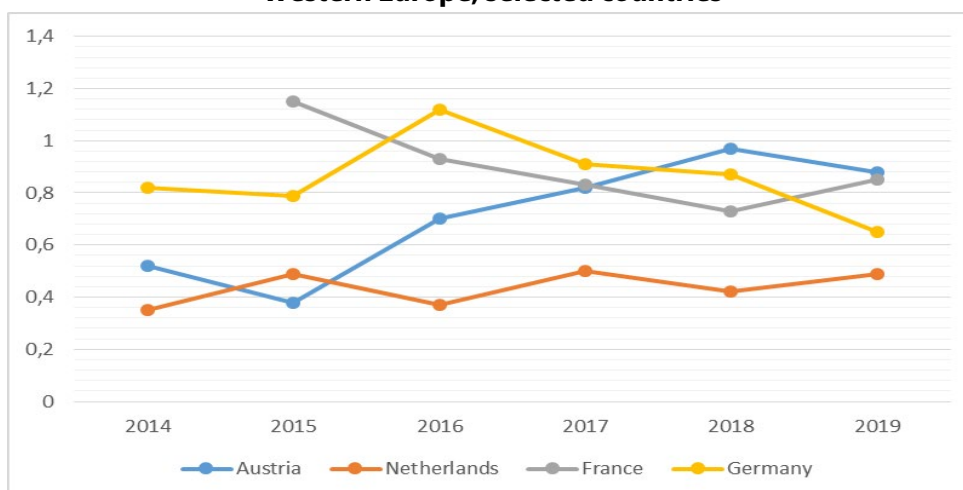
Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Southern Europe, selected countries



Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

### Western Europe, selected countries



Source: UNODC, Homicide Statistics, 2019.

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