

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Tackling femicides and crimes against women**

**Letter from the President of the General Assembly**

Today, humanity faces the repercussions of its unwillingness to recognize the patterns that constitute the great mosaic of the history of humankind. As Andre Gide once said, “Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens, we have to keep going back and beginning all over again.” The global community is under the threat of a pandemic, and it’s trying to find ways to adapt itself to the structural change after the pandemic, which is called the new normal. However, are we really adapting to a new normal when we have already gone through similar paradigm shifts, especially during the past century? This new normal gave people and governments an insight into their broken systems, an insight into this dispersed world, with everything that's going wrong with the world right now people are trying to go back and find a “ remedy for a dispersed world “ which will be our theme for this year. In the words of Leo Tolstoy, “everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself.” At SafirMUN we will be tackling most of this year's rising topics that were exposed. We will be presenting our delegates with a platform that can hopefully help them find a remedy for this dispersed world.

***Sary Matar***

***PGA of SafirMUN***

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**Introduction to the Agenda Item**

The rise in violence across the world, exacerbated by the economic downturn, has had a significant impact on violence towards women, which has risen alarmingly in recent years. Given this, robust gender violence prevention policies are yet to be adopted in the region, at both the provincial and federal levels. In the alternative, policymakers at all levels of government seem to favor invisibility over confronting the roots of widespread incompetence.

Femicide is often interpreted to refer to the deliberate killing of women for the sole reason that they are women, although more expansive meanings cover all killings of women or children. The emphasis of this fact sheet is on the narrower concept of deliberate murder of women that is widely used in legislation, regulations, and literature. Femicide is normally committed by males, but female family members are also involved. Femicide is distinct from male homicide in a number of respects.

Many cases of femicide, for instance, are caused by spouses or ex-partners and include domestic violence, threats or coercion, sexual assault, or circumstances in which women have less control or support than their partners.

Collectively, this study guide will provide the basic understanding about femicide, gender-based violence and sexual harassment with case studies upon age, race and relationship status. This will provide a variety of existing frameworks for collecting data on the mentioned issues that have been used in various ways, such as but not limited to population-based surveys, examination of service reports, murder, police, ambulance, court, and mortuary figures, marital fatality analyses, verbal autopsy reports, and reviews of news reports.

Hence, outlining the global issue at hand, hopefully the framework, policies and multilateral cooperation between relevant organizations and government, or private based institutions will be able to conduct necessary actions and minimize the cases of femicide and violence against women.

**Key Terms**

1. **Female homicide (femicide):** the unlawful and intentional causing of a death of a female.
2. **Intimate femicide:** the intentional killing of a woman by an intimate partner (husband, boyfriend, cohabiting partner, same-sex partner (current or ex), or a rejected would-be lover, as well as perpetrators from incestuous relationships.
3. **Non-intimate femicide:** the intentional killing of a woman by someone other than an intimate partner.
4. **Domestic violence:** the committed violence by one of the people in an [intimate relationship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimate_relationship) against the other person, and can take place in [heterosexual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterosexuality) or [same-sex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence_in_same-sex_relationships) relationships, or between former spouses or partners.



1. **Sexual harassment:** the type of [harassment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harassment) -which includes a range of actions from verbal transgressions to [sexual abuse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_abuse) or [assault](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_assault)- involving the use of explicit or implicit sexual overtones, including the unwelcome and inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors.

**Focused Overview**

1. **Types and prevalence of  femicide and crimes towards women**

**Intimate femicide**

* Femicide committed by a current or former husband or boyfriend is known as intimate femicide or intimate partner homicide. Preliminary findings of an ongoing study by WHO show that more than 35% of all murders of women globally are reported to be committed by an intimate partner. This number is conservative, which is particularly concerning in nonindustrialized countries.
* In addition to the ratio of women and men killed by their partner, evidence also shows that women killing their male intimate partners often act in self-defense following ongoing violence and intimidation. This corresponds that women are more likely to murder their partner while they are in the relationship, while men are more likely to kill an estranged partner and that women are more likely to kill their partner as a result of arguments or quarrels, while men are more likely to have a motivation of jealousy for killing.

**Dowry-related femicide**

* Another form of murder of women linked to cultural practices is related to dowry. It occurs primarily in areas of the Indian subcontinent and involves newly married women being killed by in-laws over conflicts related to dowry, such as bringing insufficient dowry to the family. The documented incidents of dowry-related deaths vary greatly. For example, some sources have estimated that as many as 25 000 newly married women are killed or maimed each year as a result of dowry-related violence.
* According to an analysis of data from the Global Burden of Disease study, women face a higher risk of death from burns than men and burns are the seventh most common cause of death for women aged 15–44 years worldwide. This is in large part because women spend more time cooking, often over open fires. However, some fire-related deaths of young women are also believed to be related to dowry, partner or family violence, or forced suicide, particularly in south and southeast Asia. In the WHO South-East Asia Region, burns were the third most common cause of death among women aged 15–44 years.



**Non-intimate femicide**

* Femicide committed by someone without an intimate relationship with the victim is known as non-intimate femicide, and femicide involving sexual aggression is sometimes referred to as sexual femicide. Such killings can be random, but there are disturbing examples of systematic murders of women, particularly in Latin America. For example, in 2008, more than 700 women were murdered in Guatemala; many of these murders were preceded by brutal sexual abuse and torture.
* A 2009 human rights campaign reported that there had been more than 500 femicides per year in Guatemala since 2001. In the USA, two mass school shootings in 2006 were characterized by gunmen singling out girls and female teachers. In some settings, non-intimate femicide also disproportionately affects women involved in marginalized and stigmatized professions, such as sex work and work in bars and nightclubs.

**Focused Overview**

**Focus 1: Femicide**

1. **Data findings upon femicide case**

* According to a survey, the total female violent crime rate is 24.7 per 100,000 women aged 14 and up. An intimate partner killed 50.30 percent of the women in situations where partnership status could be determined. In 1999, we report that 1,349 women were murdered by an intimate partner in the United States, resulting in an intimate femicide incidence of 8.8 per 100,000 women aged 14 and up.
* The only equivalent rate comes from the United States (3.5 per 100,000 women 15 and older in North Carolina), implying that the rate of intimate femicide in South Africa is 2.5 times greater than that recorded in this US analysis.
* Table 1 shows the rate of intimate femicide fatalities by race category. Colored women had a prevalence of 18.3/100,000, which was more than twice that of African women (8.8/100,000) and more than six times that of white women. Males are disproportionately responsible for interpersonal femicide.

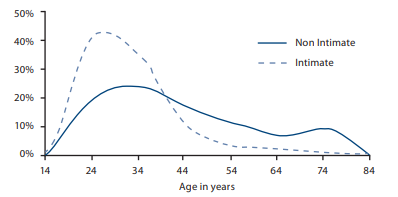
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Race | Cases per 100, 000 |
| White | 2.8 |
| Colored | 18.3 |
| Indian | 4.9 |
| African | 8.8 |
| Overall | 8.8 |

**Table 1. Rates of intimate femicide by race for women 14 years and older**

* The most frequent offenders were common-law wives, followed by boyfriends and fathers (Table 2).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Relationship Status | Proportion (%) from overall cases |
| Common-law partner | 52.10 |
| Boyfriend | 27.90 |
| Husband | 18.50 |
| Other | 1.50 |

**Table 2. The relationship status of intimate femicide cases**

* On average, women killed by intimates were younger than women killed by non-intimates. The average ages of the participants were 30.4 and 41.2 years, respectively (see Figure 2). The age trend for intimate and non-intimate homicide in South Africa indicates that it is not an expansion of homicide in the country. The demographic health study showed a similar trend of increased vulnerability for younger women when it came to intimate-partner abuse. This suggests that femicide-related mortality in South Africa is a result of the country's intimate-partner abuse epidemic. ****

**Figure 1. Age comparison of victim by type of female homicide**



**Focused Overview**

1. **Determining solutions to prevent femicide and crimes against women**

* Gender-based inequality, social constructs that accept abuse, and gender roles all contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women and children. Efforts to end abuse against women and girls have so far mostly focused on responding to and delivering services to victims of crime. To finally eliminate violence against women and children, however, prevention—addressing the underlying triggers as well as the vulnerability and protective factors associated with violence is critical.
* The key to preventing aggression is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. It will take political will, legislation that promotes gender equality, investments in women's organizations, and confronting the many types of oppression that women face on a daily basis. Over the last decade, the evidence on prevention has grown significantly, thanks in part to UN Women-supported efforts.
* UN Women has played a key role in developing [evidence-based policy and programming guidance on the prevention of violence against women and girls](https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/prevention#_Resources). As part of its prevention strategy, UN Women focuses on early education, respectful relationships, and working with men and boys, especially through, and in, the media, sports industries, and the world of work.
* UN Women helps conduct research on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of men and boys, as well as young people, related to various forms of violence, and supports advocacy, awareness-raising, community mobilization, and educational programs, as well as legal and policy reforms.

* Strengthen surveillance and screening of femicide and intimate partner violence;

In countries where sparse evidence is available on femicide, awareness-raising and advocacy could encourage cooperation among police, medical staff, and other relevant agencies to collect and report on the victim-offender relationship and the motivation for the homicide. Steps should also be taken to develop and strengthen research methods that improve understanding of the social context of femicide, including gender inequality.



* Training and sensitization of hospital and health workers, mortuary staff, and medical examiners could enable personnel to improve the documentation of cases of femicide and of the circumstances surrounding them. Evidence-based guidelines are needed, particularly in relation to the categorization of victim-perpetrator relationships and information regarding abuse history. Moreover, there is a need to improve healthcare providers’ capacity to identify intimate partner violence and the risk of femicide. In some settings, studies have shown that many women accessed health services in the year prior to being killed by their partners.
* Strengthen surveillance, research, laws, and awareness of murder in the name of ‘honor’ While all of the recommendations related to ending femicide also apply to settings where murder in the name of ‘honor’ occurs, additional measures are needed. Surveillance and research on ‘honor’ crimes are sparse in most countries, and legislation, where it exists, is often poorly enforced and easily circumvented. Advocacy to change laws that permit these types of crimes is essential.
* Advocates have reported success in raising awareness of these crimes among the public and policy-makers, by collecting and analyzing available data, court cases, and judges’ rulings, and referencing international human rights instruments relevant to protecting women’s rights. These measures are an important first step in countries where femicide in the name of ‘honor’ takes place.

**Focused Overview**

**Focus 2: Gender-based violence**

1. **Data findings on gender-based violence**

Gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women and girls (VAWG), is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. Below are several data on the mentioned issues:

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| --- | --- |
| Focus | Percentage (%) on a global scale |
| Experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence | 35 |
| Women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner | 7 |
| Murders of women are committed by an intimate partner | 38 |

**Table 3: Data findings (%) for different categories of violence against women**

This is a problem that not only affects victims of abuse and their families, but also has severe societal and economic consequences. Abuse of women is projected to cost up to 3.7 percent of a country's GDP in extreme cases, which is double than what most governments fund education for.

Inability to solve this issue now will result in considerable potential liabilities. Accumulating evidence suggests that children who grow up in a violent environment are more likely to become future survivors or violent acts.

Gender-based violence has no socioeconomic limits, and it affects women and girls from all socio - economic levels; it is a problem that has to be resolved for both developing and developed countries.

Reduced violence against women and girls necessitates a faceted, group strategy as well as long-term involvement with different stakeholders. The most successful methods address future risks for violence, such as gender roles in society and the tolerance of violence.

**Focused Overview**

**Focus 3: Sexual Harassment**

1. **Data findings upon sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment was first recognized in cases in which women lost their jobs because they rejected sexual overtures from their employers.

This type of sexual harassment became defined as quid pro quo sexual harassment (Latin for “this for that,” meaning that a job or educational opportunity is conditioned on some kind of sexual performance). Such coercive behavior was judged to constitute a violation of Article 7 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Soon it was recognized in employment law that pervasive sexist behavior from coworkers can create odious conditions of employment, what became known as a hostile work environment, and also constitute illegal discrimination.. These two basic forms of sexual harassment, quid pro quo and hostile environment harassment, were summarized in guidelines issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1980.

Hostile work or educational environments can be created by behaviors such as addressing women in crude or objectifying terms, posting pornographic images in the office, and by making demeaning or derogatory statements about women, such as telling anti-female jokes. Hostile environment harassment also encompasses unwanted sexual overtures such as exposing one’s genitals, stroking and kissing someone, and pressuring a person for dates even if no quid pro quo is involved.



Illegal sexual harassment falls under the umbrella of a more comprehensive category, discriminatory behavior. Illegal discrimination can occur on the basis of any legally protected category: race, ethnicity, religious creed, age, sex, gender identity, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetic information, physical or mental disabilities, veteran status, prior conviction of a crime, gender identity or expression, or membership in other protected classes set forth in state or federal law. Regarding sexual harassment, the focus of this topic, this includes gender harassment, a term designed to emphasize that harmful or illegal sexual harassment does not have to be about sexual activity. Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination because it is harmful and it is based on gender, and it is not necessarily motivated by sexual desire nor does it need to involve sexual activity.

**The Blockade**

Nearly 1.4 billion women lack legal safeguards from domestic economic abuse, according to the report, Global and Regional Trends in Women's Legal Protection Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment. Controlling a woman's right to access economic opportunities (money, schooling, or employment) as a means of harassment and manipulation is known as economic violence. In this instance, the blockade will have 2 divisions as per below:

1. With strong legislation and/or policies
2. No/lacking of legislation and/or policies

**Further Overview**

However, there are still a number of issues to be concerned with. In general, one out of every four countries lacks strict legislation against domestic abuse. In more than one-third of the world, laws against sexual harassment as a form of domestic violence do not apply. In half of the countries, economic abuse is not considered a form of domestic violence.

Furthermore, unmarried intimate partners are not shielded from domestic abuse in two out of three nations. In terms of the share of countries with appropriate rules, there is also significant variation between regions. Both countries in East Asia and the Pacific, as well as South Asia, have domestic violence legislation on the books.

In the Middle East and North Africa, though, pending development, just one out of every three countries does. The proportion is one in two in Sub-Saharan Africa and North America. Domestic violence laws apply in three out of four nations, but they do not address all four types of harassment, including physical, sexual, mental, and financial abuse, or protect unmarried intimate partners.





* **Involved Major Parties and Their Views**

1. **United Nations Women (UNW)**

UN Women extends its concerns to the matter, for so many women, home had become a deeply unsafe place. As for so many women, no neighbor suspected the risks of her situation and the threat her husband had become, in part because a characteristic of such abuse is often the control exerted over public appearances. Domestic violence has previously been considered private and not a matter for state interference; however, it is now recognized globally as an important area for intervention by law enforcement, health, and other social services.

The murder of women by their intimate partners is the most severe form of violence, which is often part of a continuum of other forms of violence experienced by women in intimate relationships in every country in the world, from every social category and level of education.

1. **UN OHCHR**

OHCHR mandate holders have condemned specific forms of gender-related killings, including femicide, honor-related killings, disappearances, and witchcraft-related killings of women. They have also raised concerns in relation to the significant obstacles for women in accessing justice, the climate of impunity surrounding such cases.

OHCHR’s work attaches great importance to addressing impunity for gender-related killings. OHCHR has assisted the development of relevant legal frameworks and supported efforts to strengthen investigations and judicial responses.

1. **UNHRC**

Gender-based violence programming and risk mitigation across all sectors is lifesaving and an

institutional priority for UNHRC. They work together with partners, governments, and

communities to address GBV and to implement quality programming to prevent, mitigate

and respond.  Across all our operations, they prioritize two mutually reinforcing objectives to address

 GBV:

* Reducing the risk of GBV for all persons of concern
* Ensuring all survivors of GBV have adequate and timely access to quality services that meet their needs

**Timeline of Events**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Description** |
| **1791** | In response to France’s Declaration on the Rights of Man, Olympe de Gouges writes the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen  “Article 1: Woman is born free and remains the equal of man in rights. Social distinctions can only be founded on a common utility” |
| **1878** | The first International Congress on Women’s Rights is held in Paris, France. |
| **1915** | A Call to the Women of All Nations: the Third International Congress concludes with the formation of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. |
| **1937** | The League of Nations established the Committee of Experts on the Legal Status of Women, the predecessor to the Commission on the Status of Women (1946). |
| **1986** | Created by the 1985 General Assembly Resolution on domestic violence, an Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family is formed which concludes with recommendations on legal reform, policing, prosecutor and health sector training, social and resource support for survivors |
| **1994** | United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopts a mandate to integrate the rights of women into the United Nations human rights framework, with the goal of tackling violence against women (Resolution1994/45). |
| **1997** | The United Nations General Assembly adopts the ‘Model Strategies and Practical Measures on Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice’ (Resolution 52/86). |
| **2015** | Transforming our World: the United Nations General Assembly adopts the Sustainable Development Goals – one target specifically calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, while other targets are relevant to this effort (Resolution 70/1)  • Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  • Target 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. |



Question a Resolution Must Answer (QARMAs)

1. Who is at greatest risk for femicide and violence, and how can such risk be assessed?
2. What responsibilities do the UN Member States and relevant authorities have to combat violence towards women, what is the success rate regarding their progress and accountability to resolve and minimize the issues at hand?
3. What kind of interventions would be most effective at preventing femicide, and what are the parameters to measure the effective rate?
4. Are there any legislations or frameworks in the respective UN member states that protect women from violence and sexual harassment? If any, has the legislation been effective?

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