



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



**DATA 3
MATTERS**

11/2021

Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members

Global estimates 2020

Some 47,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in 2020. This means that, on average, a woman or girl is killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes. Where trends can be calculated, they show that the magnitude of such gender-related killings remains largely unchanged, however, with only marginal increases and decreases over the past decade.



Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

General coordination and content overview:

Angela Me (Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch)
Enrico Bisogno (Chief, Data Development and Dissemination Section)

Analysis and drafting:

Maurice Dunaiski
Andrada-Maria Filip

Data and estimates production:

Camelia Abdelgelil
Antonela Guberac
Tamara Hoefer
Natalia Ivanova
Francesca Rosa
Fatma Usheva

Editing:

Jonathan Gibbons

Cover design and production:

brama Studio
Suzanne Kunnen

Comments:

We thank our colleagues Sven Pfeiffer and Claudia Baroni in the Justice Section of UNODC for their helpful comments.

Disclaimers

This report has not been formally edited. The contents of this publication can in no way reflect the views or policies of UNODC or contributory organizations, nor do they imply any endorsement. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of UNODC concerning the legal status of any country, territory or city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. UNODC would appreciate a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

Contact: UNODC, DDDS: unodc-ddds@un.org

Cover photography: © Heidemarie Pleschko

Copyright © 2021, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

KEY FINDINGS

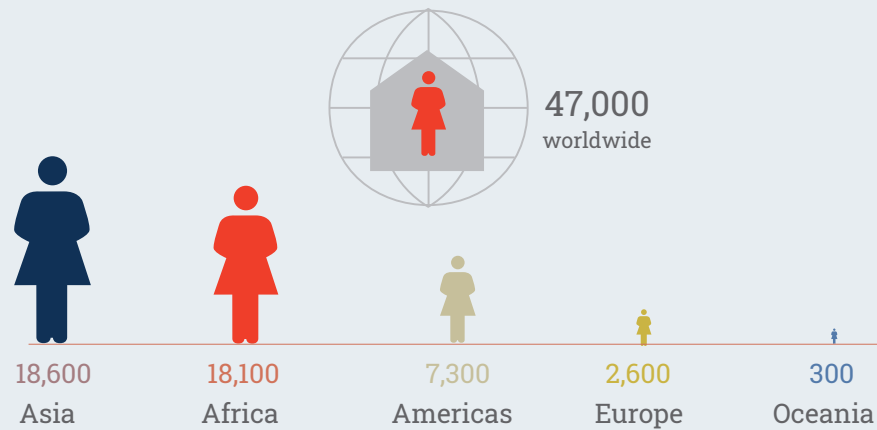
- Some 47,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in 2020. This means that, on average, a woman or girl is killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes.
- Women and girls in all regions across the world are affected by this type of gender-based violence. With an estimated 18,600 victims, Asia is the region with the highest number of victims in absolute terms, while Africa is the region with the highest level relative to the size of its female population.
- Accounting for 80 per cent of the total, the vast majority of all homicide victims worldwide in 2020 were men or boys, but the sex composition of homicide victims differs markedly depending on the context. Women and girls account for only one tenth of all homicide victims perpetrated in the public sphere, yet they bear a disproportionate burden of lethal violence perpetrated in the home: in 58 per cent of all killings perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, the victim was a woman or girl.
- National trends in gender-related killings of women and girls are often volatile. On average, Europe has witnessed a 13 per cent decline in gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere over the past decade, while the Americas has seen an increase of 9 per cent, although these averages mask contrasting trends between the countries and subregions within those two regions. Due to the limited availability of data, it is not yet possible to identify time trends in gender-related killings in other regions.
- Lethal violence experienced by women and girls in the private sphere appears to be a more intractable problem than killings of women and girls outside the home. Eastern Europe has witnessed a reduction of 47 per cent in female homicides perpetrated outside the home over the past decade, while female homicides perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members have seen a reduction of 15 per cent over the same period. Although less marked, similar trends have also been recorded in Western Europe and South America.
- Global data on the impact of COVID-19 confinement measures on gender-related killings of women and girls remain patchy and inconclusive. The average annual number of these killings showed an increase of 11 per cent from 2019 to 2020 in Western Europe and of 5 per cent in Southern Europe. No change was detectable in Northern Europe and there was a slight decrease in Eastern Europe. By comparison, in Northern America the number of gender-related killings of women and girls increased by 8 per cent, in Central America by 3 per cent and in South America by 5 per cent. These increases were of a similar magnitude to previous annual changes recorded in the past decade.
- At the national level, monthly data from a limited number of countries covering the period October 2019 to December 2020 show high variability in trends across countries, but suggest that, overall, female intimate partner/family-related homicides remained relatively unaffected by the lockdowns in those countries.

Global estimates

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

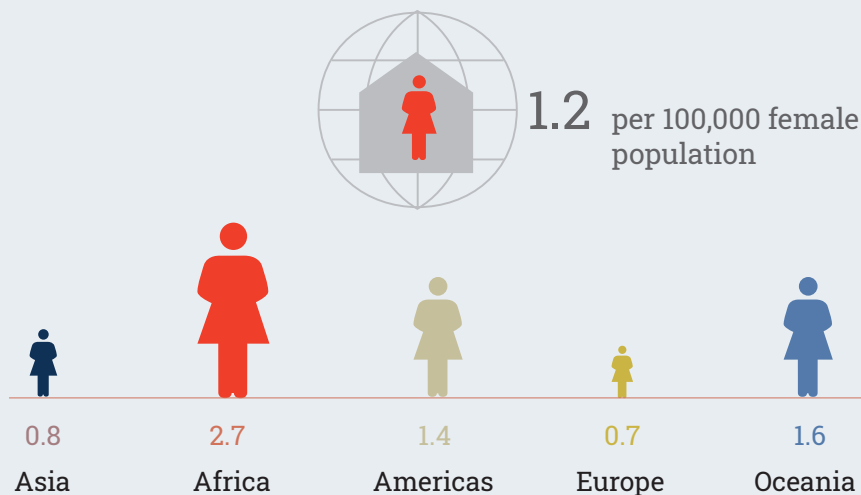
Total female intimate partner/family-related homicides

2020



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

2020



Gender dimension of homicide

Homicides within the private sphere affect both sexes, but women and girls bear the largest burden of lethal violence perpetrated within the home, accounting for approximately 6 out of every 10 homicide victims killed by intimate partners or other family members.

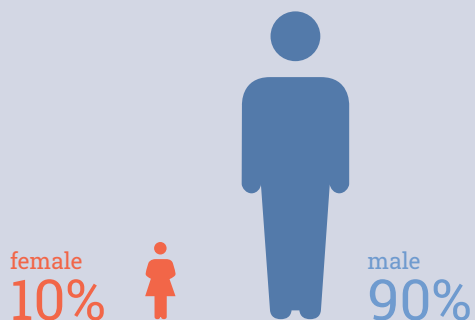
Total homicides

2020



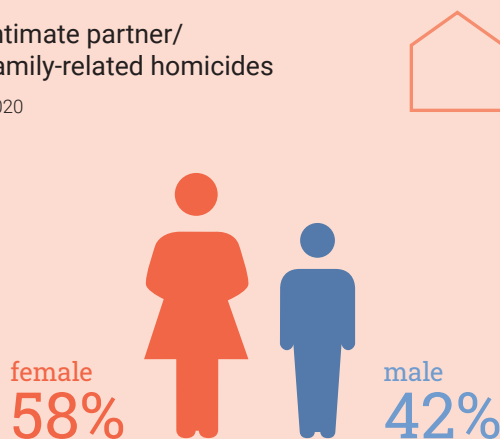
Non-Intimate partner/ family-related homicides

2020

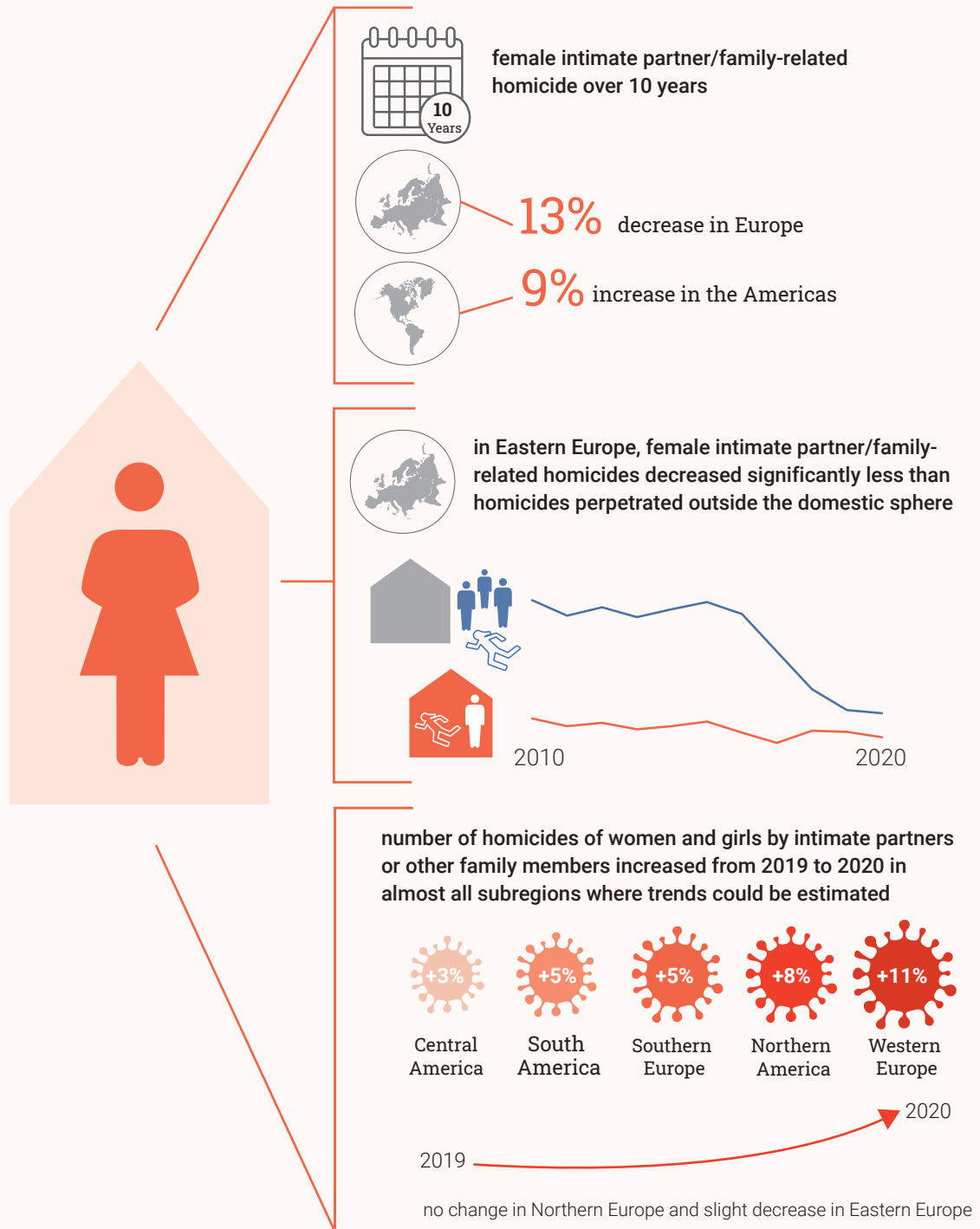


Intimate partner/ family-related homicides

2020



Trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicide



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

In 2020, approximately 47,000 women and girls were killed worldwide by their intimate partners or other family members. This means that, on average, a woman or girl is killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes.

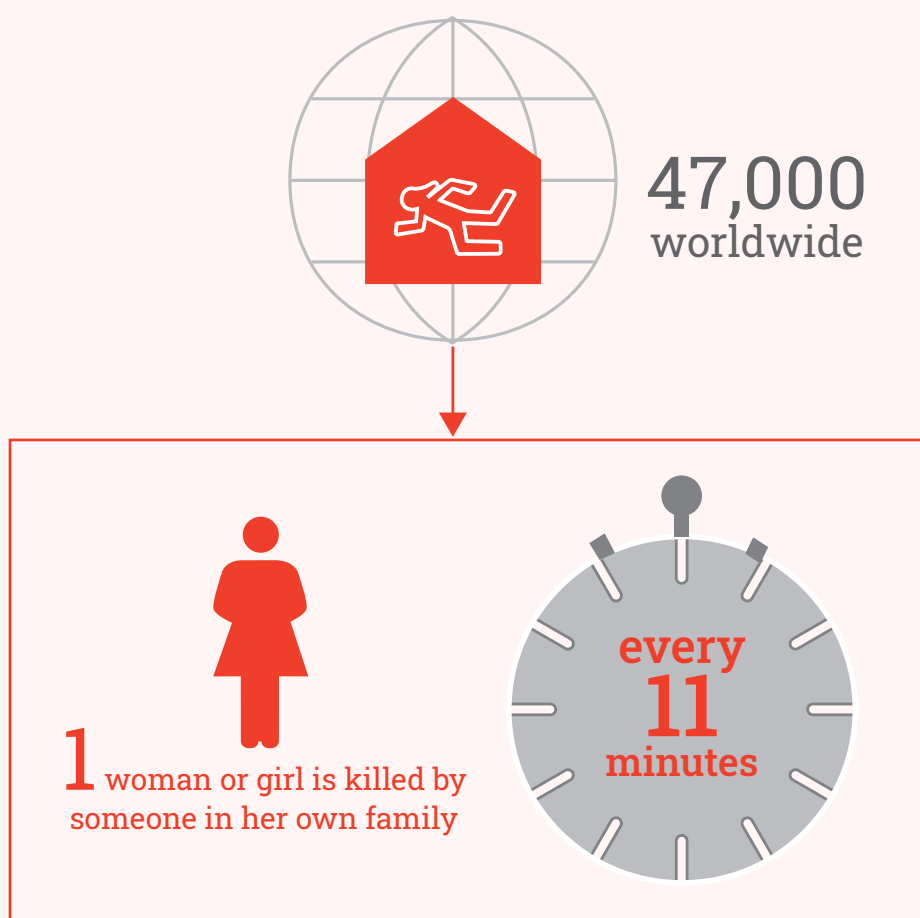


TABLE OF CONTENT

1.	WHY FOCUS ON KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS PERPETRATED BY INTIMATE PARTNERS OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS?	9
2.	EXTENT OF FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS	13
3.	EXTENT OF FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE IN RATES	14
4.	TRENDS IN FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE	14
5.	HOMICIDE PERPETRATED IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE HAS A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN.....	18
6.	BURDEN OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE BORNE BY WOMEN AND GIRLS	19
7.	WHAT IMPACT HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAD ON GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS?	20
8.	POLICY IMPLICATIONS	25
9.	STATISTICAL ANNEX	28
10.	METHODOLOGICAL ANNEX.....	31

WHY FOCUS ON KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS PERPETRATED BY INTIMATE PARTNERS OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS?

The killing of women and girls at the hands of intimate partners or other family members – people whom they would normally be expected to trust – represents one of the most extreme manifestations of gender-based violence. Such killings are often the culmination of prior experiences of gender-based violence, which can include psychological, sexual and physical abuse.¹

Female homicide perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members is not the only form of gender-related killing of women and girls. This type of homicide can also be perpetrated outside the private sphere, for example, in the case of intentional homicides of female sex workers, killings of women related to various forms of trafficking and organized crime, and killings of women accused of witchcraft. Several types of female homicide are committed on the grounds of gender-related motivations² but there is not yet a standardized approach to define and count all forms of gender-related killings of women and girls. When available, statistical data on this type of homicide are often based on national definitions, practices or specific legislation that are not comparable at the global level. To address this issue, the United Nations system has held a series of consultations aimed at developing a new statistical approach to improving data on gender-related killings of women and girls (see box below).

This research brief is focused on female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members. This is because – based on available evidence – intimate partner/family-related homicide accounts for the largest proportion of gender-related killings or “femicides”.³ Furthermore, data on this type of homicide are more readily available and comparable than data on gender-related killings that take place outside the family sphere. Internationally comparable data on female intimate partner/family-related homicide remain patchy, but are available for a large enough number of countries to enable the production of global and regional estimates,⁴ thanks also to the implementation of the framework provided in the *International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)*.⁵ Although still affected by limitations caused by poor coverage, in particular in Africa and Asia, these data provide useful information on the magnitude of the problem and, in some cases, information on trends. Data on gender-related killings perpetrated outside the family sphere are more limited and, to date, do not meet the same level of standardization and geographical coverage.

¹ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (United Nations publication, 2019).

² General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, para. 19 (CEDAW/C/GC/35).

³ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (United Nations publication, 2019), p.25.

⁴ During the period 2010–2020, 95 countries made available at least once data on intentional homicides of female victims perpetrated by their intimate partner or other family members. These data were submitted to UNODC by Member States through the annual United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS). Where applicable, UN-CTS data are supplemented with external data sources. Regional groups are based on the UN M49 classification scheme.

⁵ UNODC, *International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)* (Vienna, 2017).

STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS (ALSO REFERRED TO AS “FEMICIDES/FEMINICIDES”)

Different approaches to and definitions of gender-related killings of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide and/or feminicide”) exist at the national and international levels.⁶ For example, the 2015 report of the United Nations Secretary General on Action against gender-related killing of women and girls referred to this concept as “the intentional murder of women and girls because of their gender”.⁷ From a conceptual point of view, such killings differ from other types of intentional killings of women and girls because they are based on gender-related motivations, either directly or indirectly.

In order to harmonize the existing statistical approaches for measuring gender-related killings of women and girls, in 2019 the United Nations Statistical Commission⁸ asked UNODC to develop a “statistical framework on gender-sensitive crime statistics, with a focus on the gender-related killing of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)”. UNODC, together with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), undertook a thorough expert-level consultation process in order to develop a global statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings of women and girls, aligned with the *International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)*; this box briefly describes the proposed conceptualization of the statistical framework.⁹

In general terms, gender-related killings of women and girls are committed on the grounds of “gender-related factors such as the ideology of men’s entitlement and privilege over women, social norms regarding masculinity, and the need to assert male control or power, enforce gender roles, or prevent, discourage or punish what is considered to be unacceptable female behavior”.¹⁰ Gender-related killings can take place in a wide range of situations within both the private and public spheres, and within different contexts of victim–perpetrator relationship. In principle, what defines a gender-related killing is not a specific relationship or type of perpetrator but the fact that it can be rooted in the gender-related motivations described above.

Such killings have a clear conceptual meaning, but they are challenging to operationalize in statistical terms as this requires an understanding of which behaviours, modus operandi and circumstances associated with a killing are actually gender-related.¹¹ The following set of non-exhaustive standard characteristics related to the modus operandi or context of an intentional homicide has been identified as indicative of gender-related motivations in killings of women and girls.¹²

⁶ For further reference, see United Nations, “Report of the Special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo”, paras. 14-18 (A/HRC/20/16); UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (United Nations publication, 2019).

⁷ United Nations, “Action against gender-related killing of women and girls”, Report of the Secretary-General (2015), para. 2 (A/70/93).

⁸ (E/CN.3/2019/19).

⁹ UNODC and UN Women, “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls (also referred to as “femicides/feminicides”)”, forthcoming.

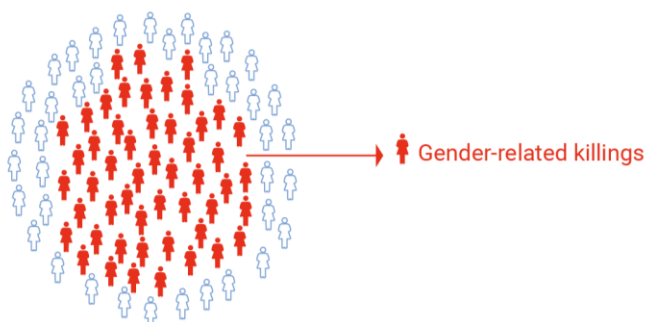
¹⁰ General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, para. 19 (CEDAW/C/GC/35).

¹¹ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (United Nations publication, 2019).

¹² For further information, see UNODC and UN Women, “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)” (forthcoming).

Conceptual framework for measuring gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)

Gender-related killings refer to intentional homicides of women due to gender-related motivations



Gender-related killings are motivated by underlying factors such as the ideology of men's entitlement and privilege over women, social norms regarding masculinity, and the need to assert male control or power, enforce gender roles, or prevent, discourage or punish what is considered to be unacceptable female behaviour.

Characteristics indicative of gender-related motivations of killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)



In principle, these variables could be used to identify gender-related killings among intentional homicides of women and girls, but they are not yet mainstreamed in national statistical systems and data on gender-related killings cannot be readily collated at the national and international levels purely on the basis of these characteristics. Until national statistical systems fully adopt these standard parameters, the first building block in the construction of data on gender-related killings can be approximated on the basis of women and girls killed by partners or other family members. While the victim's relationship with a perpetrator who is a partner or other family member is not necessarily indicative of specific gender motivations by itself, evidence indicates that this type of homicide is overwhelmingly related to gender roles. Data on women and girls killed by partners and family members are also more readily available because information on the relationship between the homicide perpetrator and victim is already recorded in a significant number of national systems. Being aware that an approximation is made on the grounds of data availability and statistical feasibility, data on women killed by intimate partners and on women killed by other family members can be used as the first building block for counting gender-related killings.

The other building block to count gender-related killings lies outside the family sphere, where the eight “modus operandi” or contexts remain the only parameters that can operationalize the gender-relevant subset of homicide.

Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killing of women and girls

The data blocks for collecting and aggregating statistics on gender-related killings

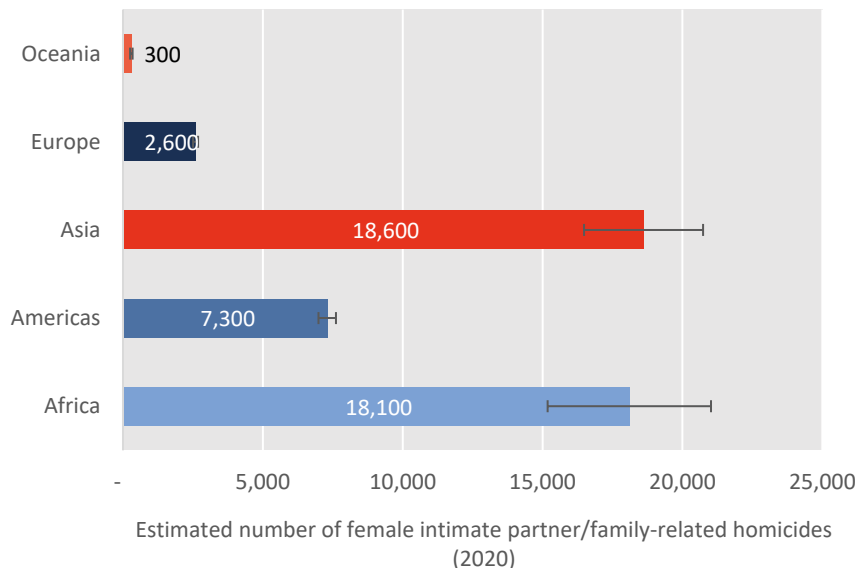


The aim of the new statistical framework is also to provide operational guidance to national statistical systems; several institutions can produce data on gender-related killings and the harmonization of practices across national institutions fosters comparative analyses of data. For example, the analysis of relevant data across stages of the criminal justice process – from cases and prosecutions to convictions – can provide important information about state response in relation to gender-related killings of women and girls. Furthermore, the framework is aimed at providing guidance on the collection of additional information (disaggregating variables) for to conducting policy-relevant analyses to identify drivers and enablers of gender-related killings and factors that could help prevent them.

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

In 2020, it is estimated that – out of a total of 81,00 female victims of homicide – 47,000 women (41,500–52,600)¹³ and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members (including fathers, mothers, uncles and brothers).¹⁴ With an estimated 18,600 victims (15,100–21,000), Asia accounted for the largest number of female intimate partner/family-related killings in 2020. This was followed by Africa, with 18,100 (16,500–20,800), and the Americas, with 7,300 (7,000–7,600), Europe accounted for 2,600 (2,500–2,700) female intimate partner/family-related killings in 2020 and Oceania recorded the lowest number, with 300 (250–350) (figure1).¹⁵ It is important to note, however, that these absolute numbers are also influenced by the differences in the size of the populations of the world regions. With an estimated population of 4.6 billion in 2020, Asia is by far the most populous region, so it is not surprising that the continent accounts for the largest share of female intimate partner/family-related homicides globally.

Figure 1: Estimated number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide, by region (2020)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: Error bars represent estimation error due to imputation of missing values at the country level. The bands do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. The estimates are based on the latest available data, which remain limited, in particular in Africa and Asia. The size of the error bars provides an indication of the level of uncertainty that the estimates carry both at the regional level.

¹³ The global and regional estimates are produced on the basis of available national data and through a statistical model imputing missing values at the country level. They are complemented by an interval of uncertainty that accounts for estimation error due to the imputation of missing values at the country level. The bands do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. For more information, see the methodological annex to this document.

¹⁴ The 2020 estimate of 47,000 victims is not directly comparable to the 2017 figure (50,000 victims) published in the *Global Study on Homicide 2019* due to an improvement in the coverage of national data and refinements in the statistical model. The different global estimates for 2017 and 2020 should not be interpreted as evidence of a decrease in the global number of gender-related killings in the private sphere over this time span.

¹⁵ The difference of 100 killings between the estimated global total and the sum of the regional estimates is due to rounding.

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

From a comparative perspective, it is more informative to look at the number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in different regions per 100,000 female population than in absolute numbers, as the former takes into account differences in population size and growth. Victimization rates are also better than absolute numbers at capturing women's actual risk of being killed by someone in their family.

In 2020, it is estimated that out of every 100,000 women and girls worldwide, 1.2 were killed by their intimate partners or other family members.¹⁶ While Asia accounts for the largest absolute number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide, it is in Africa that women and girls appear to be most at risk of being killed by their intimate partners or other family members. In 2020, the female intimate partner/family-related homicide rate in Africa was estimated at 2.7 per 100,000 female population, compared with 1.6 in Oceania, 1.4 in the Americas, 0.8 in Asia and 0.7 in Europe.

The variability in the rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide across the five world regions was significantly lower in 2020 than the variability in the total homicide rate, which ranged from roughly 2.5 in Europe to almost 15.0 in the Americas.¹⁷ Thus, while the overall level of lethal violence varies significantly across the regions, the variability is less pronounced in the case of female killings within domestic contexts.

3. TRENDS IN FEMALE INTIMATE PARTNER/FAMILY-RELATED HOMICIDE

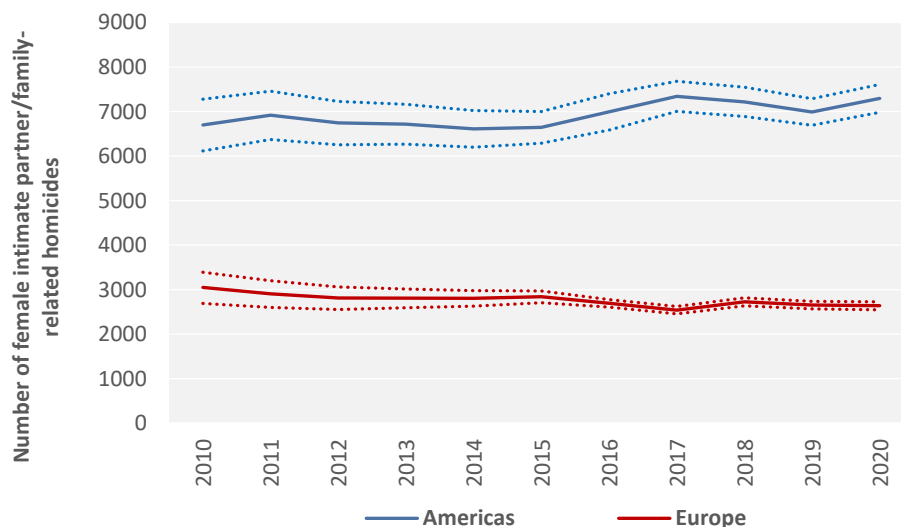
In those regions where data availability allows for an investigation of trends over time (the Americas and Europe), substantial differences can be observed in trends in the annual number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides. Both in Europe and the Americas, data availability and national trends vary, with some countries displaying increases over certain time periods, some displaying decreases and some a level of year-on-year variability or irregular data availability that make it impossible to discern clear trends.¹⁸ However, what does seem to be common to many national trends is that they show relative stability when longer periods of time are considered, rather than year-on-year changes.

Regional estimates level out different national trends but, overall, Europe has seen a modest reduction (13 per cent) in the total number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide over the past decade, while there has been a similar level of increase in the Americas (9 per cent) over the same period, albeit at a very different absolute level (figure 2).

¹⁶ Due to improvements in data coverage and statistical modelling, the estimated 2020 global rate of 1.2 female intimate partner/family-related homicides per 100,000 women is not directly comparable to the 2017 rate of 1.3 rate published in the *Global Study on Homicide 2019* and should not be interpreted as a decrease in the risk of such killings at the global level in recent years.

¹⁷ UNODC Homicide data, preliminary estimates for 2020 (forthcoming).

¹⁸ For the variability in Europe, see figure 17 in the annex to this document; for the variability in the Americas, see figure 18.

Figure 2: Trends in the total number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in the Americas and Europe (2010–2020)

Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

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

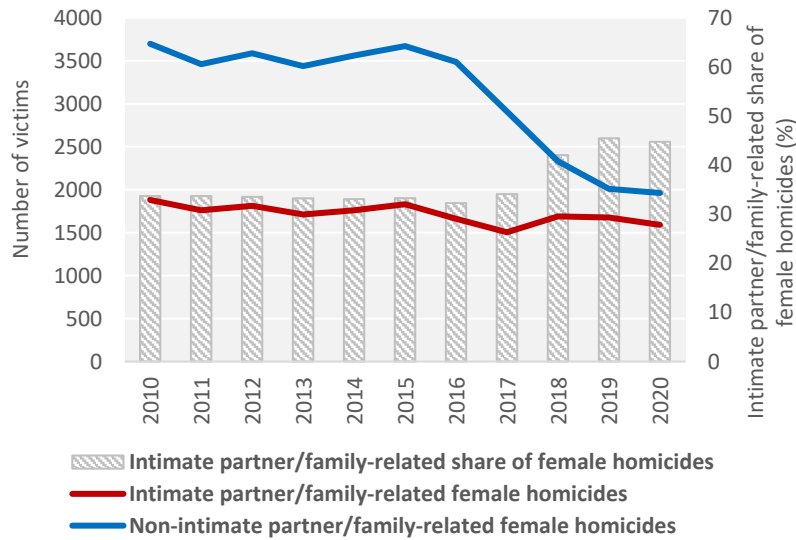
The modest reduction in the total number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in Europe is the result of national trends that fluctuate around a small overall decline in several countries in Eastern Europe, including Belarus and Romania, and a few countries in Western Europe. In several populous European countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom there has been variability around stable levels of gender-related killings in the private sphere in the last few years (figure 19).

The overall trend in female intimate partner/family-related homicides witnessed in the Americas over the last decade is the result of divergent trends experienced at the country level. For example, among the most populous countries in the region, the United States and Brazil have recorded a slight decrease in recent years, while there has been an upward trend in Mexico (figure 20).¹⁹ By contrast, less populous countries, but with higher rates of female intimate partner/family-related homicide, such as El Salvador and Honduras, have recorded some reductions since 2015 (figure 20). Overall, the Americas are characterized by substantial heterogeneity at the country level when it comes to levels of and trends in intimate partner/family-related homicides and other gender-based killings.

The average trends in Europe and the Americas mask differences and commonalities between subregions. While in Western, Southern and Northern Europe, the number of female homicides within the private sphere is consistently higher than in the public sphere, trends in Eastern Europe (figure 3) and the other subregions of Europe (figure 4) suggest that female intimate partner/family-related killings are harder to eradicate than other types of killings of women and girls. Both subregions have seen a noticeable decrease in the number of female victims of killings outside the family over the past decade (47 per cent in Eastern Europe and 21 per cent in Western Europe), whereas the number of female homicides perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members has remained relatively unchanged. As a result of these different trends, the share of total female homicide victims that were killed by intimate partners or other family members has increased substantially, from 34 per cent in 2010 to 45 per cent in 2020 in Eastern Europe and from 60 per cent to 63 per cent over the same period in the other subregions of Europe.

¹⁹ For more information on the situation in Mexico, see Calderón, L. et al. (eds.), *Organized Crime and Violence in Mexico: 2021 Special Report* (Justice in Mexico, University of San Diego, October 2021).

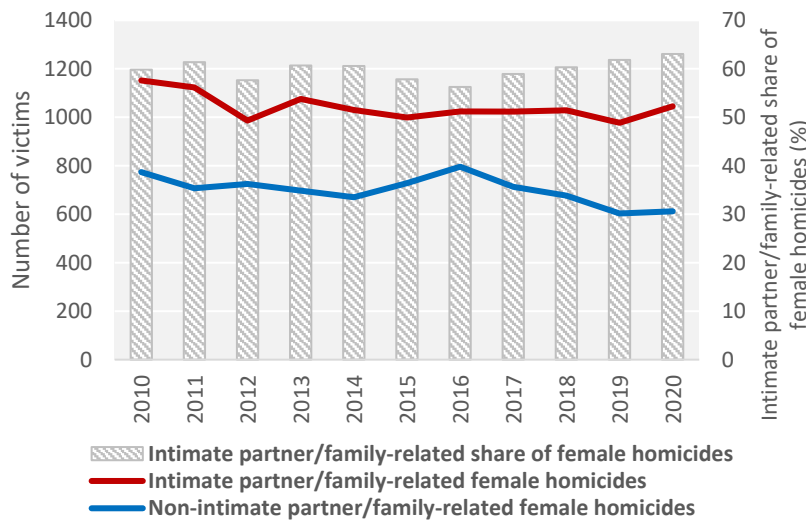
Figure 3: Trends in female homicides in the private and public sphere in Eastern Europe (2010–2020)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: Eastern Europe is defined according to the M49 regional grouping.

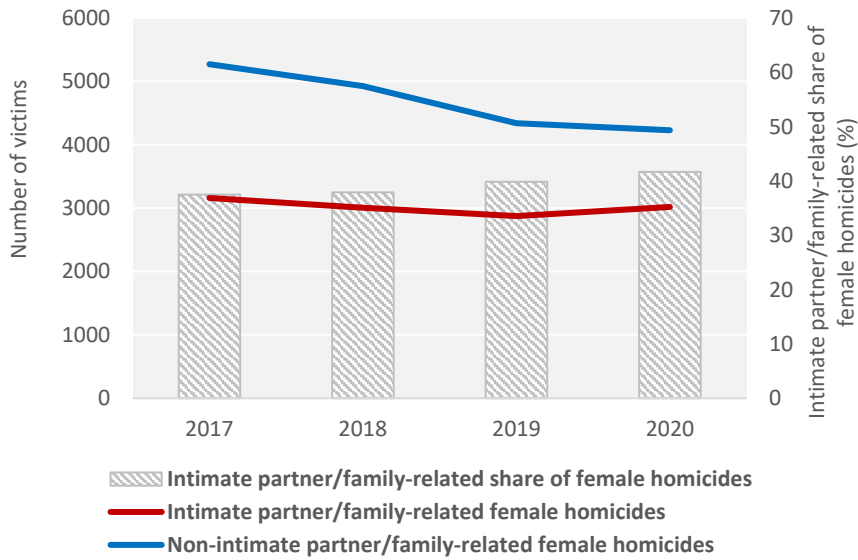
Figure 4: Trends in female homicides in the private and public sphere in Western, Northern and Southern Europe (2010–2020)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

A similar pattern can be observed in South America where, from 2017 to 2020, female homicides perpetrated outside the private sphere decreased by 20 per cent while they remained relatively stable within the family (figure 5). These data suggest that factors that triggered the decrease in female non-intimate partner/family-related homicides in Europe and South America only partially impacted on intimate partner/family-related homicides. They also suggest that positive contextual developments and policy interventions that are successful in reducing lethal violence in the public sphere, may not be sufficient to achieve the same reductions in gender-based killings within the family.

Figure 5: Trends in female homicides in the private and public sphere in South America (2017–2020)

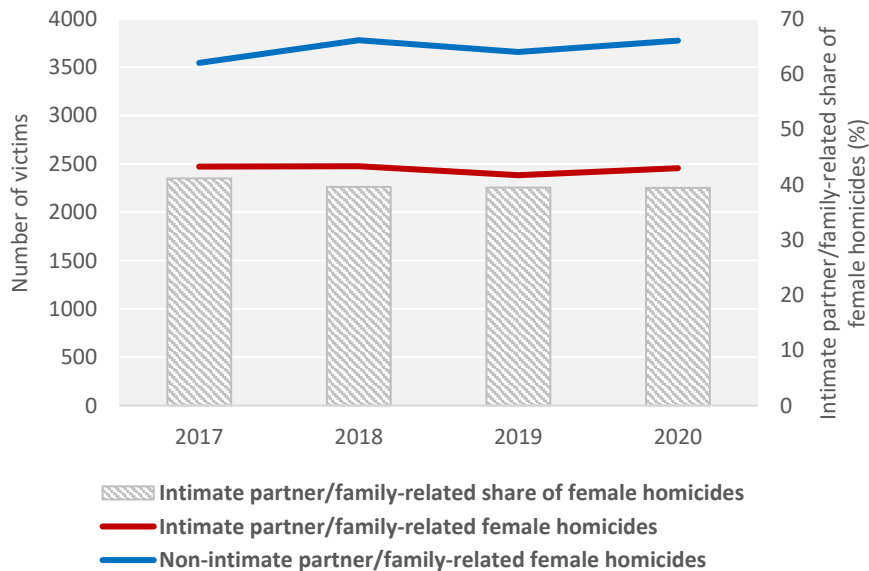


Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: South America is defined according to the M49 regional grouping.

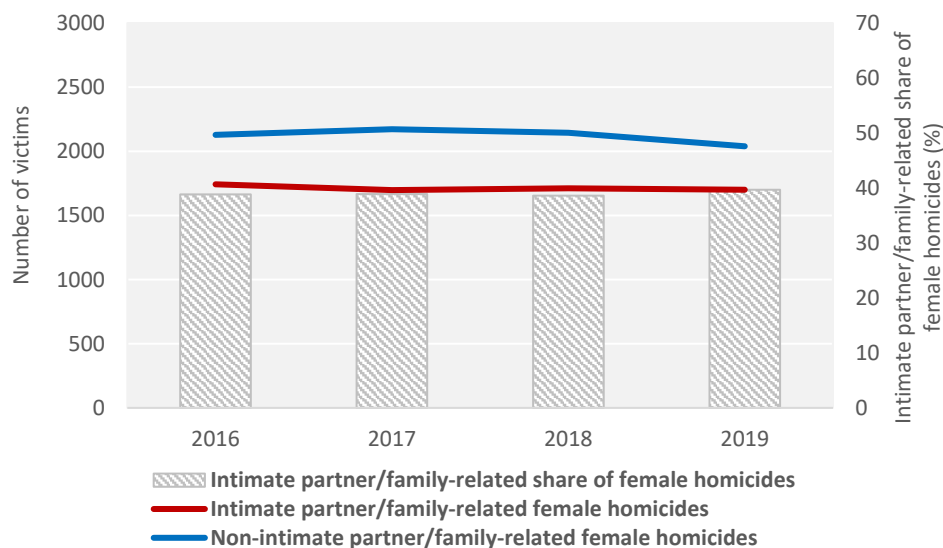
Trends in the number of women and girls killed in the private and public sphere are flatter in Central America (figure 6) and Northern America (figure 7), although the slight increase in non-intimate partner/family-related killings in Central America does not seem to have affected the stable trend in intimate partner/family-related killings. This suggests that female intimate partner/family-related killings tend to remain stable even in contexts where there are dynamics that trigger increases in non-family violence.

Figure 6: Trends in female homicides in the private and public sphere in Central America (2017–2020)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: Central America refers to Central America and the Caribbean, as defined according to the M49 regional grouping.

Figure 7: Trends in female homicides in the private and public sphere in Northern America (2016–2019)

Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: Northern America is defined according to the M49 regional grouping. Data availability constraints for the year 2020 mean that this year is omitted from the trend analysis for Northern America.

In Africa, Asia and Oceania, it is not possible to identify trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicide over the past decade, because of the limited availability of sufficiently disaggregated homicide data covering the period 2010–2020. While the link between trends in female homicide and those perpetrated by intimate partner or other family members is not always direct (see section 4), the significant reduction in female homicides in certain populous countries, such as India, Japan, the Philippines and Turkey, since 2010 may indicate that the situation is slowly improving in Asia. This is substantiated to some extent by country-level data on gender-related violent deaths from populous countries such as India, where violent deaths related to dowry payments, accusations of witchcraft and other gender-related factors have been slowly declining (figure 21).

In several populous countries in Africa, including Morocco, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, numbers of total female victims of intentional homicides in the last decade are not indicative of clear trends, but show that the level of lethal violence perpetrated against women and girls in the region remains high in relative terms (figure 23). In Oceania, the two largest countries (Australia and New Zealand) have both recorded little progress in terms of reducing the annual number of female intimate partner/family-related killings over the past decade (figure 22).

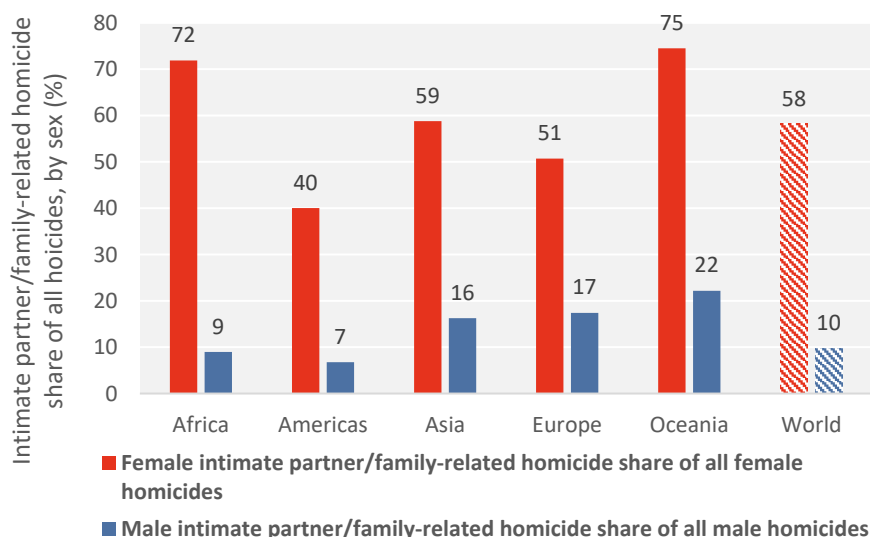
4. HOMICIDE PERPETRATED IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE HAS A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN

Accounting for 80 per cent of the total, the vast majority of all homicide victims worldwide in 2020 were men or boys, but the sex composition of homicide victims differs markedly depending on the context. Women and girls account for only one tenth of all homicide victims perpetrated in the public sphere, yet they bear a disproportionate burden of lethal violence perpetrated within the home: in 58 per cent of all killings perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, the victim was a woman or girl.

Out of all intentional homicides of women and girls in 2020, 58 per cent were perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, which suggests that the most dangerous place for women is the home. By contrast, the share of all male homicides that can be attributed to intimate partners or other family members amounted to just 10 per cent in 2020, suggesting that men and boys are primarily at risk of being intentionally killed outside the family sphere.

These gender-specific patterns of victimization differ substantially across regions (figure 8). For example, in regions with lower overall levels of intentional homicide such as Europe and Oceania, the share of male homicides related to violence in the family sphere is larger, at 17 per cent and 22 per cent respectively, than in regions with very high levels of homicidal violence such as Africa and the Americas.

Figure 8: Share of intimate partner/family-related homicides among all female and male homicides, by region (2020)



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

5. BURDEN OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE BORNE BY WOMEN AND GIRLS

Intimate partner homicide represents the ultimate breach of trust within the home. Moreover, this type of homicide has consequences that go far beyond the direct victims.²⁰ For example, the surviving offspring not only lose one parent to homicide but may also lose the other to prison, and they are often obliged to leave their parental home as a result.²¹

Based on available data,²² homicides of female intimate partners account for an average of roughly 67 per cent of all female intimate partner/family-related killings,²³ which suggests that killings by current and former intimate partners account for the largest proportion of all female intimate partner/family-related killings. This means that women and girls bear an even greater burden in the case of intimate partner homicide than of intimate partner/family-related killings in general: on average, women and girls account for approximately 68 per cent of all victims of intimate partner homicide.²⁴

Moreover, it appears that the burden of intimate partner homicide borne by women and girls has remained relatively stable in recent years: in 17 countries in various regions, the disparity between the annual

²⁰ Children can also become direct victims of intimate partner violence, for example, in cases of “familicide” or when children are killed in a deliberate attempt to make the intimate partner suffer. See UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 6, *Killing of Children and Young Adults* (United Nations publication, 2019).

²¹ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (United Nations publication, 2019).

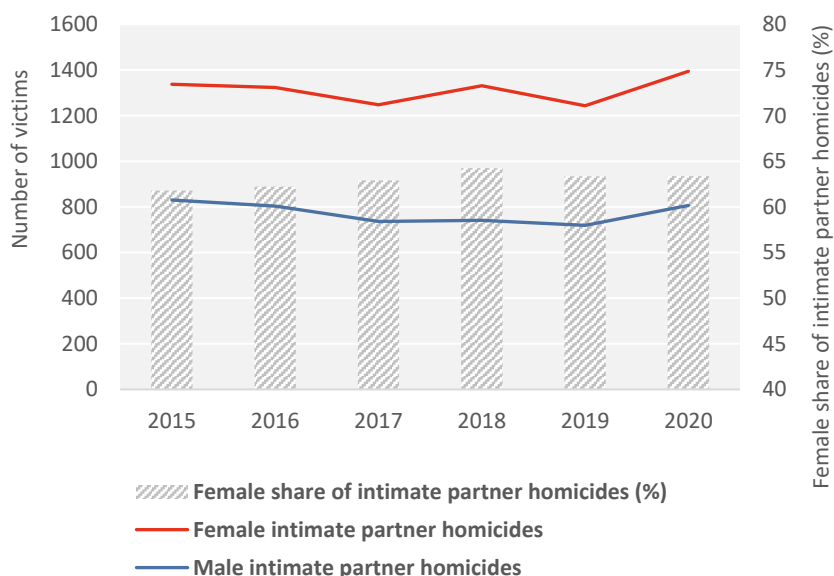
²² Data on female homicides perpetrated exclusively by intimate partners are available from 67 countries across all regions for at least one year in the period 2015–2020.

²³ Average weighted by the number of female intimate partner/family-related killings in each of the 67 countries.

²⁴ Note that the average is weighted by the number of intimate partner/family-related killings (male and female victims) in each of the 67 countries, giving more weight to more populous countries.

numbers of male and female intimate partner killings did not change significantly over the period 2015–2020 (figure 9).²⁵

Figure 9: Trends in male and female intimate partner killings in 17 selected countries (2015–2020)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset.

Note: Based on data from 17 countries where data was available (Croatia, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland).

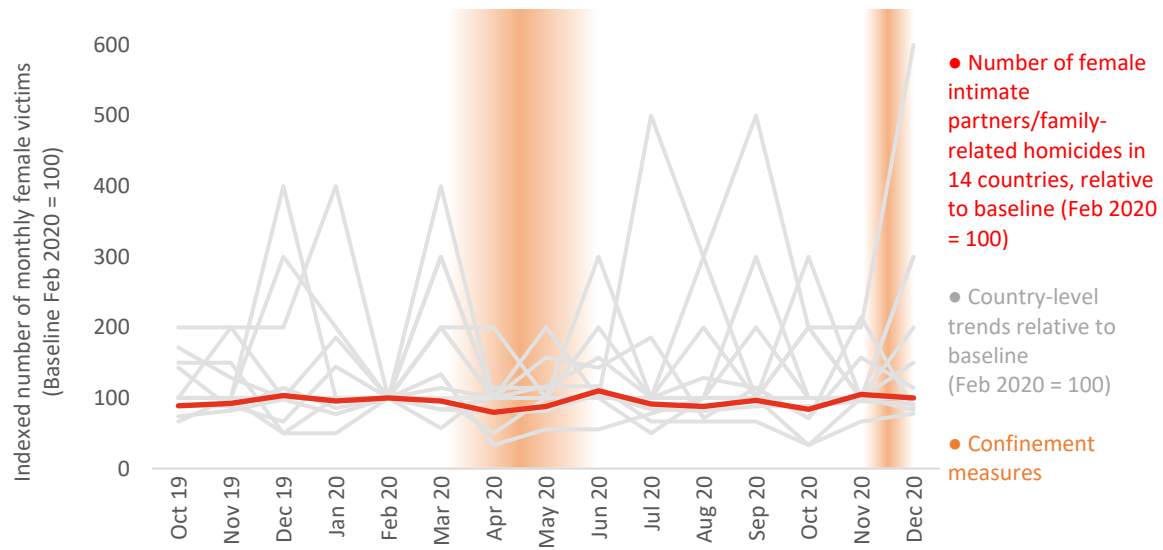
6. WHAT IMPACT HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAD ON GENDER-RELATED KILLINGS?

Global data on the impact of COVID-19 confinement measures on gender-related killings of women and girls remain patchy and inconclusive. The average annual number of these killings showed an increase of 11 per cent from 2019 to 2020 in Western Europe and of 5 per cent in Southern Europe. No change was detectable in Northern Europe and there was a slight decrease in Eastern Europe. By comparison, in Northern America the number of gender-related killings of women and girls increased by 8 per cent, in Central America by 3 per cent and in South America by 5 per cent. These increases were of a similar magnitude to previous annual changes recorded in the past decade.

At the national level, monthly data from 14 countries in various regions show high variability in trends across countries but suggest that, overall, female intimate partner/family-related homicides remained relatively unaffected by the lockdowns in those countries.

²⁵ The slight difference in the female share of intimate partner homicide victims between this group of 17 countries (63 per cent in 2020) and the female share of intimate partner homicide victims in the larger group of 67 countries referred to earlier (67 per cent in 2020) is because of the inclusion of different countries as well as the weighting approach applied the larger group of countries.

Figure 10: Indexed monthly number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in 14 countries (October 2019–December 2020)



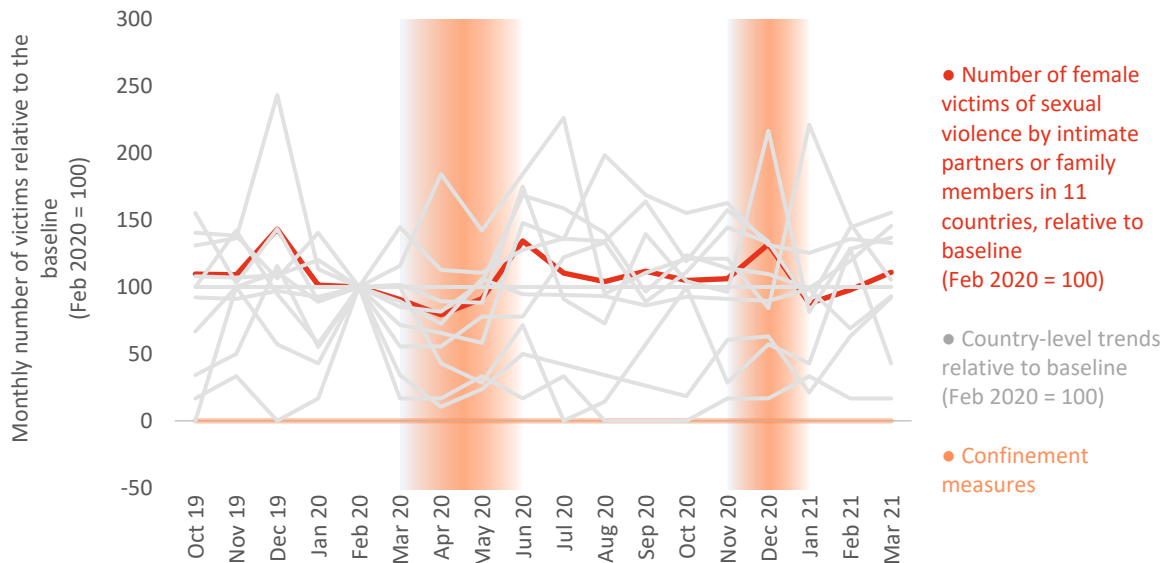
Source: UNODC, The Impact of COVID-19 on Drugs and Crime. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/coronavirus.html>.

Note: Based on monthly data from 14 countries (Armenia, Bahamas, Croatia, Ecuador, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Slovenia and Spain).

The broader impact of COVID-19 mobility restrictions on other types of gender-based violence also remains unclear because of the limited availability of data. Evidence from 11 countries in various regions suggests that the number of cases of sexual violence (figure 11) and physical assault (figure 12) perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members reported to authorities declined briefly during the first wave of confinement measures in early 2020 but reverted to the previous level as countries emerged from the initial lockdown. This suggests that during the first wave of confinement measures there was likely both a decrease in the accessibility of women to institutions for reporting incidents of domestic violence and in the capacity of authorities to record those incidents.²⁶

²⁶ UNODC Research brief, "What crime and helpline data say about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reported violence against women and girls" (2020).

Figure 11: Indexed monthly number of female victims of sexual violence perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, as reported to authorities in 11 countries (October 2019–March 2021)

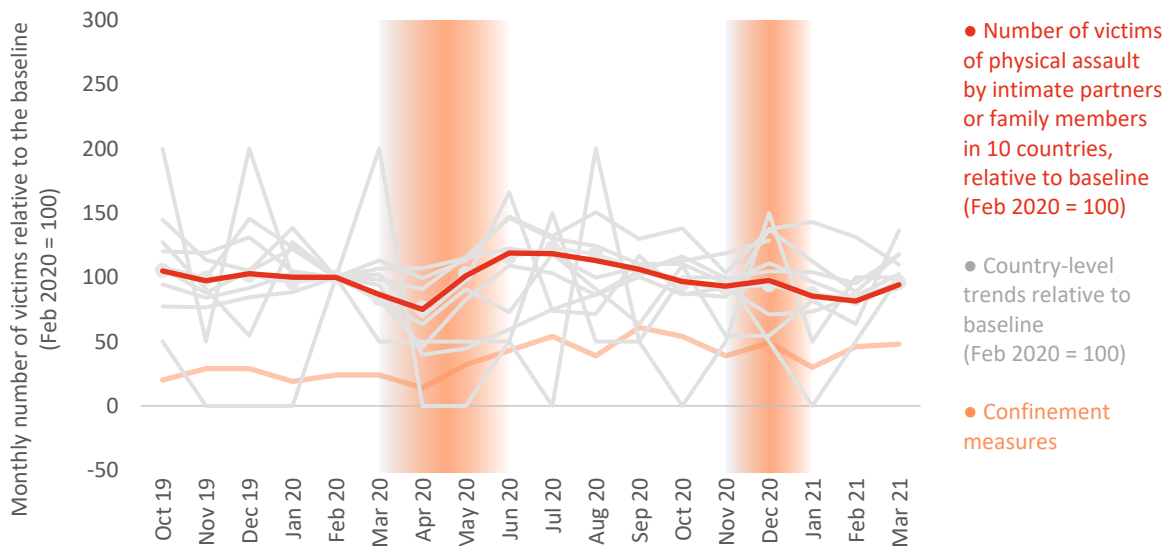


* 11 countries: Armenia, Croatia, Latvia, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar (Burma), Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

Source: UNODC, The Impact of COVID-19 on Drugs and Crime. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/coronavirus.html>.

Note: Based on monthly data on sexual violence cases from 11 countries (Armenia, Croatia, Latvia, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland)

Figure 12: Indexed monthly number of female victims of physical assault perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, as reported to authorities in 10 countries (October 2019–March 2021)



** 10 countries: Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macao SAR China, Morocco, Namibia, Poland, Slovenia,

Source: UNODC, The Impact of COVID-19 on Drugs and Crime. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/coronavirus.html>.

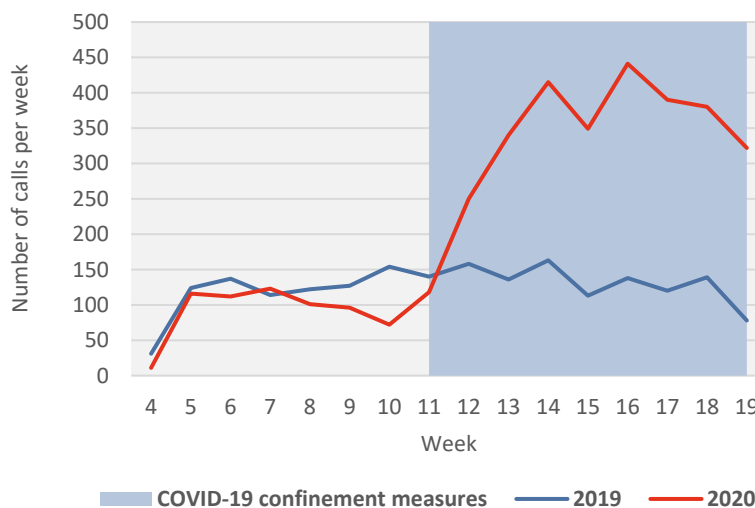
Note: Based on monthly data on sexual violence cases from 10 countries (Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macao, China, Morocco, Namibia, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland).

Domestic violence helpline data from several countries in Europe and Latin America also paint a mixed picture of the impact of COVID-19 confinement measures on the level of violence experienced by women and girls in the home. Some national helpline data suggest a sharp increase in reported violence against women in the home. For example, data from the national domestic violence helpline in Italy show a drastic, four-fold increase²⁷ in the weekly number of calls reporting a case of violence at the start of the first lockdown, which started on 9 March 2020 (figure 13). A similar, albeit less pronounced, trend can be observed in helpline data relating to the first lockdown in Argentina, with a noticeable increase in call volumes as restrictions were implemented (figure 14). The patterns observed in Italy and Argentina are corroborated by recent studies that assessed the impact of COVID-19 confinement measures on violence against women using call service data.²⁸

Helpline data from other countries only show minor fluctuations after lockdown measures were introduced, but they disappeared shortly afterwards. For example, helpline data from Denmark (figure 15) and Mexico (figure 16) suggest slight decreases in call volumes after confinement measures were introduced, followed by a return to the pre-lockdown level shortly afterwards. Some helpline data also show changes within the range of the variability observed in the pre-pandemic period.²⁹

Overall, the broader impact of COVID-19 restrictions on other types of gender-based violence (beyond homicidal violence) remains uncertain due to the limited availability of data. Criminal justice data suggest that there was a predominantly declining trend in the number of incidents of sexual assault and rape reported to and recorded by authorities shortly after lockdown measures were implemented. This suggests that during the first wave of confinement measures there was a decrease in the accessibility of women to institutions for reporting incidents, which often translated into an increase in requests for assistance directed to helplines for victims of domestic violence.

Figure 13: Weekly number of requests for help from victims of violence received by national helpline, Italy (February–April 19 and 2020)



Source: UNODC, elaborated from weekly data from Italy's national helpline for victims of gender-based violence and stalking (<https://www.1522.eu/>).

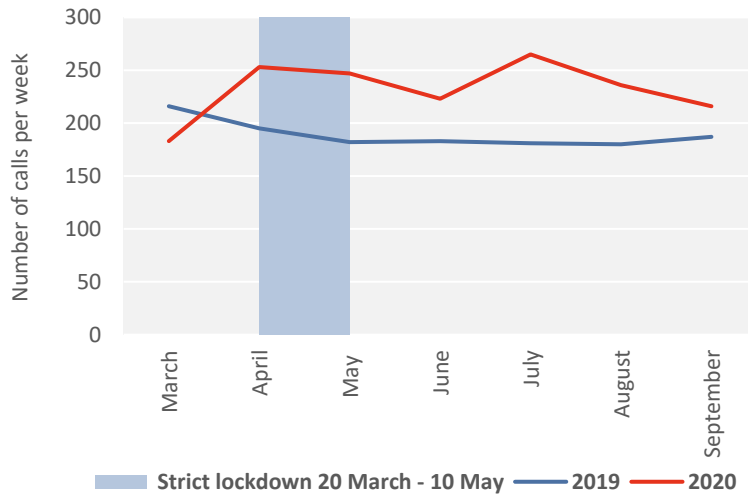
Note: The first national lockdown was imposed on 9 March 2020 (week 11).

²⁷ In relation to the pre-lockdown period in 2020 and the reference year 2019.

²⁸ Leslie, E. and Wilson, R., "Sheltering in place and domestic violence: evidence from calls for service during COVID-19", *Journal of Public Economics*, vol. 189 (2020); Agüero, J., "COVID-19 and the rise of intimate partner violence", *World Development*, vol. 137 (2020).

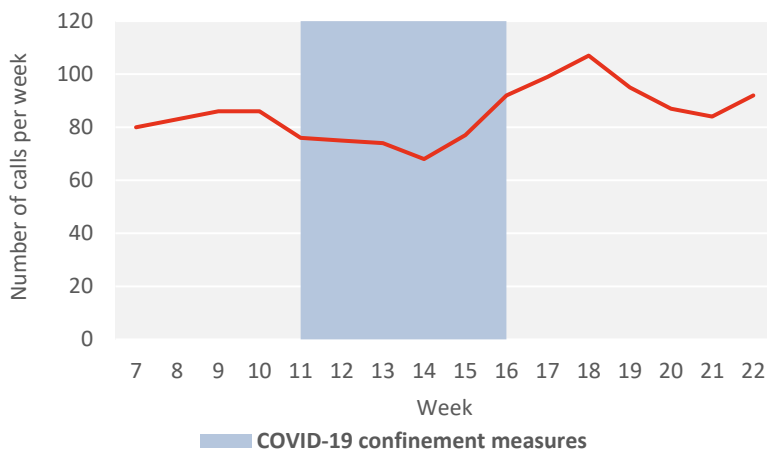
²⁹ For more information, see UNODC Research brief, "What crime and helpline data say about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reported violence against women and girls" (2020), p.4.

Figure 14: Average daily number of calls received by gender-based violence helpline, Argentina (March–September 2019 and 2020)



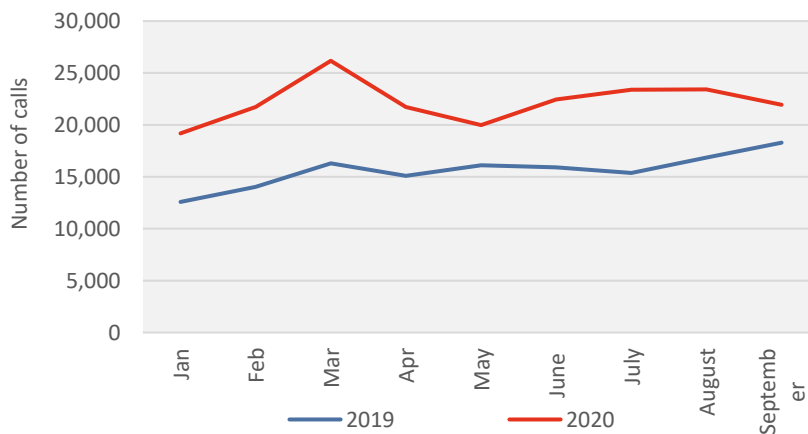
Source: UNODC, elaborated with data from the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, Argentina.

Figure 15: Number of weekly calls received by national helpline, Denmark (10 February–31 May 2020)



Source: UNODC, elaborated from Lev Uden Vold (Live Without Violence), national helpline providing support to victims, perpetrators, family/friends and professionals, Denmark.

Figure 16: Total number of calls related to incidents of violence against women received by national helpline, Mexico (January–September 2019 and 2020)



Source: UNODC, elaborated with data from Secretariado ejecutivo del Sistema nacional de seguridad publica, Mexico.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Countries can implement different types of policy interventions to prevent gender-related killings and, more broadly, gender-based violence against women and girls. The evidence presented in this research brief indicates that this type of violence tends to remain constant over time, even in situations where other types of lethal violence show signs of decreasing. In line with the call to action by the United Nations Secretary-General,³⁰ long-term strategies to prevent gender-related killings by addressing harmful social norms that normalize violence against women should be combined with measures that can be implemented in the short term to protect women and girls in situations of risk, especially in situations of domestic abuse. This can be done by strengthening accessibility to services for female victims of violence and by intervening in specific situations that can trigger lethal violence among intimate partners and families.

Four areas of intervention are of key importance in addressing the problem of gender-related killings of women and girls.

1. Closing data gaps in gender-related killings of women and girls

The collection and dissemination of comprehensive and disaggregated data on gender-related killings of women and girls is a priority for increasing public awareness and developing evidence-based policies and programmes.³¹ Data on gender-related killings of women and girls are still not available in many countries and, where they exist, often rely on incomparable national definitions and practices. The forthcoming statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings, developed jointly by UNODC and UN Women, can provide a standardized approach and support Member States in going beyond existing limitations concerning the collection and disaggregation of data on gender-related killings of women and girls. In addition to female intimate partner/family-related homicide, which is the initial building block for the measurement of gender-related killings, the statistical framework provides guidance on identifying and counting other types of homicides related to gender factors. The statistical framework is aligned to the *International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)*,³² and can be used by Member States to collect, analyse and disseminate data on different forms of gender-related killings and on the criminal justice response (arrests, prosecutions, convictions) to such killings. The statistical framework can also be a tool for strengthening and harmonizing existing efforts to collect data on gender-related killings by civil society organizations, academia and initiatives such as Femicide Watch.³³

2. Preventing and addressing gender-based violence by intimate partners or other family members

Considering that most gender-based killings of women and girls are perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members, specific interventions tackling lethal gender-based violence in the private sphere are warranted. At least 155 countries have already passed laws on domestic violence,³⁴ and most national action plans on gender-based violence or violence against women include specific actions against domestic and intimate partner violence. A range of interventions can prevent the escalation of violence against women in domestic contexts, such as:

Protection orders

Protection orders and restraining orders have been found to decrease the likelihood of intimate partner violence and repeat-victimization after separation.³⁵ However, after police intervention,

³⁰ Report of the Secretary-General on action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93). Available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/797541?ln=en>.

³¹ See <https://forum.generationequality.org/news/covid-19-exposes-fault-lines-gender-equality-strong-focus-violence-against-women-un-general>.

³² Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/iccs.html>.

³³ See A/76/132.

³⁴ World Bank Group, *Women, Business and the Law 2020* (Washington D.C., 2020).

³⁵ Holt, V. L. et.al., "Do protection orders affect the likelihood of future partner violence and injury?", *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, vol. 24, No. 1 (2003), pp. 16-21.

perpetrators may become more antagonistic and violence can quickly escalate. Further mechanisms and interventions that ensure protection from violent partners may be necessary for preventing intimate partner homicide.³⁶ Simple, quick and accessible protection and restraining or barring orders, as well as a registration system for such orders, are effective when they form part of a broader package of measures aimed at preventing lethal risks to women, including confidential 24/7 hotlines and domestic violence shelters.³⁷

Domestic violence services

Evidence assessing the impact of domestic violence services (such as helplines and shelters) suggests that these can reduce victims' exposure to domestic violence, which is associated with a decline in intimate partner homicides.³⁸ It is important to ensure that such support can be sustained over the long term and, if necessary, combined with other legal measures, such as protection orders, to ensure that women affected by intimate partner violence have access to places of safety, as well as the option to remain in their home, based on the principle that the perpetrator and not the survivor should have to leave the home.

Firearm control

The presence of a firearm in the household has been identified as a risk factor for intimate partner killings.³⁹ Limiting perpetrators' access to firearms, especially in situations when there is previous domestic abuse and the victim and perpetrator are living in the same house, can prevent intimate partner violence from culminating in a killing.⁴⁰ Awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of exposure to firearms in domestic disputes should also be considered.⁴¹

Divorce

Divorce legislation should be considered carefully in relation to its possible impact on violence against women and girls. As divorce can be a period of vulnerability for women,⁴² a holistic approach should be adopted in divorce legislation and coordination among government agencies and courts is needed for preventing and addressing violence that could lead to gender-related killings of women and girls in a coherent manner.⁴³

3. Ensuring effective prosecution and sanctions for perpetrators of gender-related killings

The criminal justice response to gender-related killings should ensure that justice is accessible and responds to the needs of victims and survivors, and should be commensurate with the gravity of the offence, holding perpetrators accountable and sending a clear message to society about the gravity of such killings.⁴⁴ In some countries, in particular in Latin America, specific legislation has been passed on the criminalization of gender-related killing as a measure to strengthen the criminal justice response, while in other countries, gender-related killings are treated in the same vein as other intentional

³⁶ Dugan, L. et al., "Do domestic violence services save lives?", *National Institute of Justice Journal*, Issue 250 (US State Department, 2003).

³⁷ See report of the Secretary-General report on action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93), para. 41(x); and Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/RES/65/228). Available at: <https://undocs.org/a/res/65/228>.

³⁸ Dugan, L. et al., "The effects of state and local domestic violence policy on intimate partner homicide", National Institute of Justice, (Washington, 2004).

³⁹ See, for example, Campbell J.C. et al., "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite control study", *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, No. 7 (2003), pp. 1089-1097.

⁴⁰ See Resolution 65/228 of the United Nations General Assembly "Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women" (A/RES/65/228).

⁴¹ See report of the Secretary-General on action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93), para. 41(v).

⁴² See UNODC, *Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses to Violence against Women* (Vienna, April 2014).

⁴³ See report of the Secretary-General on action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93), para. 41(x); and UNODC, *Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses to Violence against Women* (Vienna, April 2014).

⁴⁴ UNODC guidance on the criminal justice response to gender-based violence, including gender-based killings, is available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-tools-gender.html>.

homicides.⁴⁵ In general, criminal law reform should be accompanied by a review of criminal policies – including investigatory and prosecutorial policies and practices – to ensure that action is taken with due diligence and without delay.⁴⁶ At the level of criminal justice institutions, this requires the establishment of specialized units and mechanisms to monitor and sanction criminal justice officials who do not exercise due diligence in cases of gender-related killing.⁴⁷

4. Investing in evidence-based prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls

In the long term, it is necessary to put in place interventions at multiple levels that can reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence and reduce the number of gender-related killings of women and girls. Based on a systematic review of different prevention interventions, the United Nations system has identified seven key strategies to prevent violence against women, summarized in the RESPECT framework,⁴⁸ which can address the root causes of gender-based violence at the country level:

1. **Relationship skills strengthened** – this strategy refers to interventions aimed at individuals or groups of women, men or couples for improving skills in interpersonal communication, conflict management and shared decision-making.
2. **Empowerment of women** – this strategy refers to both economic and social empowerment interventions, including inheritance and asset ownership, and microfinance.
3. **Services ensured** – this strategy refers to a range of services, including police, legal, health, and social services, provided to survivors.
4. **Poverty reduced** – this strategy refers to interventions, ranging from cash transfers to labour force interventions, targeting women and households with the primary aim of alleviating poverty.
5. **Environments made safe** – this strategy refers to interventions aimed at creating safe schools, public spaces and work environments, among others.
6. **Child and adolescent abuse prevented** – this strategy refers to interventions aimed at establishing nurturing family relationships, prohibiting corporal punishment and implementing parenting programmes.
7. **Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms** – this strategy refers to interventions that challenge harmful gender attitudes, beliefs, norms and stereotypes that uphold male privilege and female subordination, that justify violence against women and that stigmatize survivors. These may range from public campaigns and group education to community mobilization efforts.

The seven strategies should not be treated as silos, as successful programmes often have implemented interventions that fall across more than one of the seven strategies. Only a wide-ranging approach and long-term commitment can lead to a substantial reduction in the number of gender-related killings.

⁴⁵ Deus, A., and Gonzales, D., *Análisis de Legislación sobre Femicidio/Feminicidio en América Latina y el Caribe e Insumos para una Ley Modelo*, ONU Mujeres (Panamá, 2018).

⁴⁶ See report of the United Nations Secretary-General on action against gender-related killing of women and girls (A/70/93), paras. 10 and 41 (bb-ee).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, para 41 (ff-jj).

⁴⁸ WHO, “RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women” (2015). Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-RHR-18.19>.

8. STATISTICAL ANNEX

Figure 17: Country-level trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicides in Europe (2014-2020)

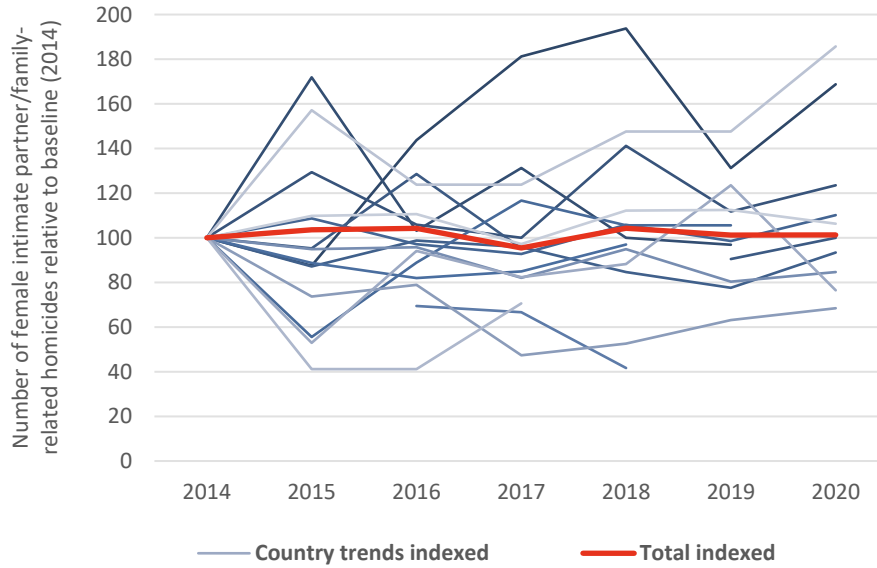


Figure 18: Country-level trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicides in the Americas (2014-2020)

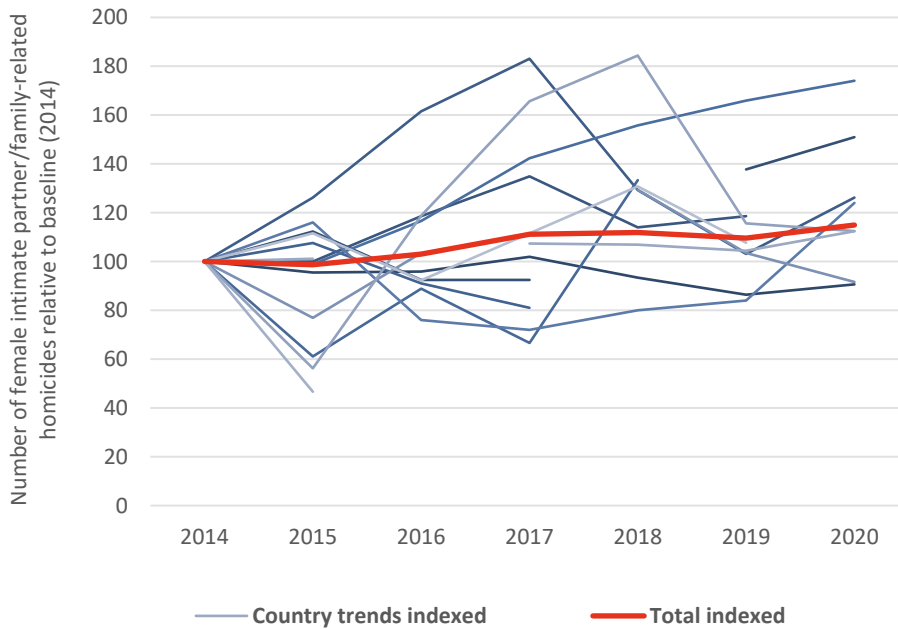
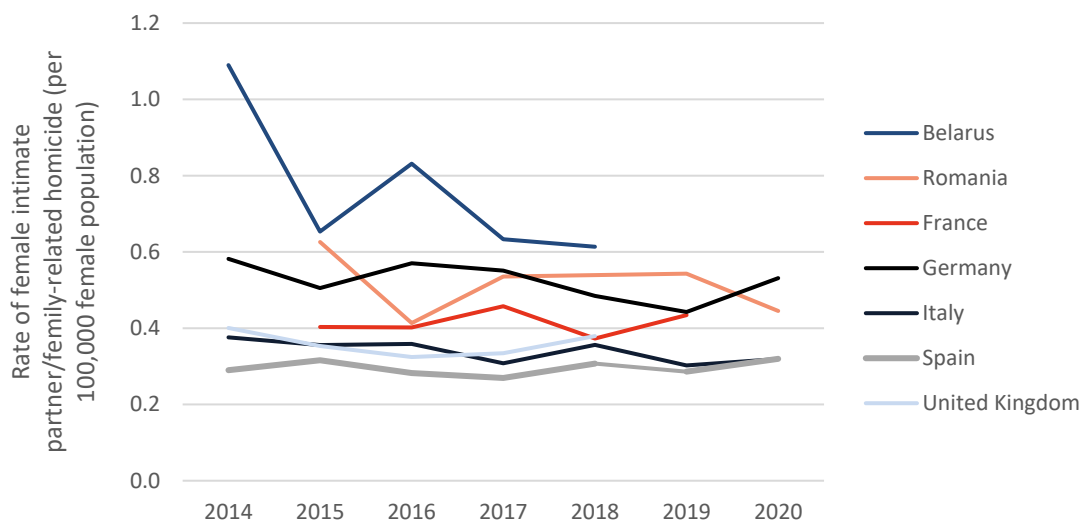
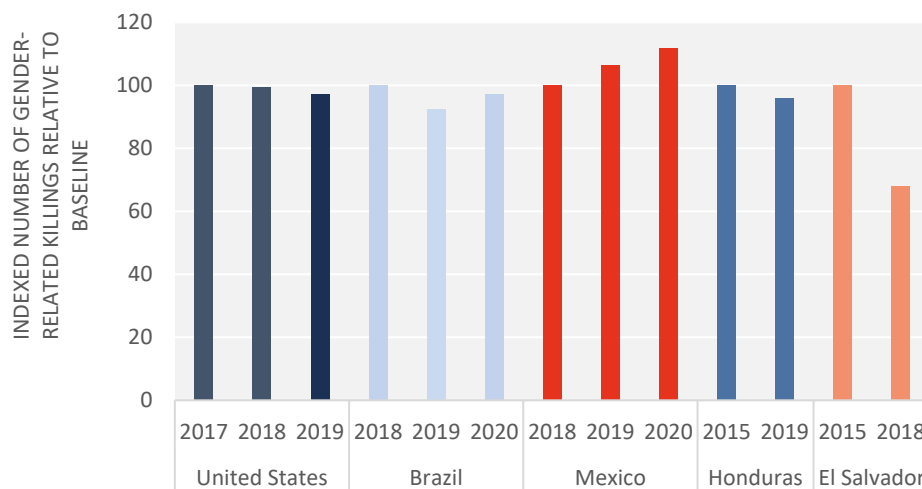


Figure 19: Rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population in selected European countries (2014-2020)



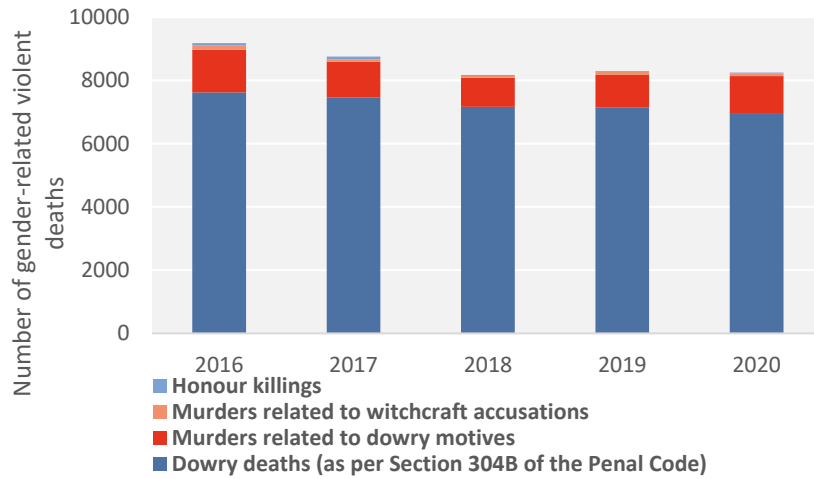
Source: UNODC Homicide dataset.

Figure 20: Country-level trends in female intimate partner/family-related homicides in selected countries of the Americas (selected years)



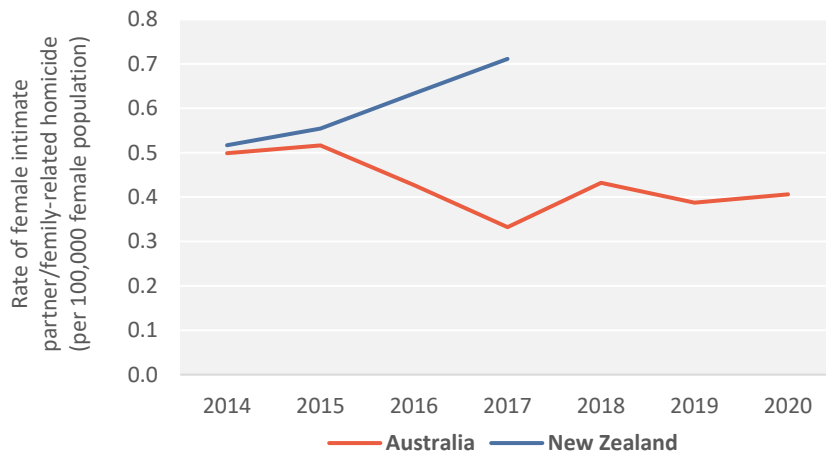
Note: Available data for the United States refer to female intimate partner/family-related homicides and are based on the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports (available at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-10.xls>). Available data for Brazil and Mexico refer to "femicide" cases as defined in respective national legislations. Besides killings of women and girls by intimate partners or other family members, other types of gender-related killings can be considered as femicides. For Mexico, see *Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, Gobierno de Mexico* (available at <https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/documentos/lineamientos-para-el-registro-y-clasificacion-de-los-presuntos-delitos-de-feminicidio?state=published>) and for Brazil, see *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (available at <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/anuario-2021-completo-v6-bx.pdf>). The selection of the specific criminal offence to conduct investigation and/or prosecution in cases when a woman is intentionally killed is subject to determination by competent authorities and this can affect comparability and even completeness of relevant data (see UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*). Available data for Honduras and El Salvador refer to female intimate partner/family-related homicides and are based on the UNODC Homicide dataset.

Figure 21: Number of gender-related violent deaths in India (2016-2020)



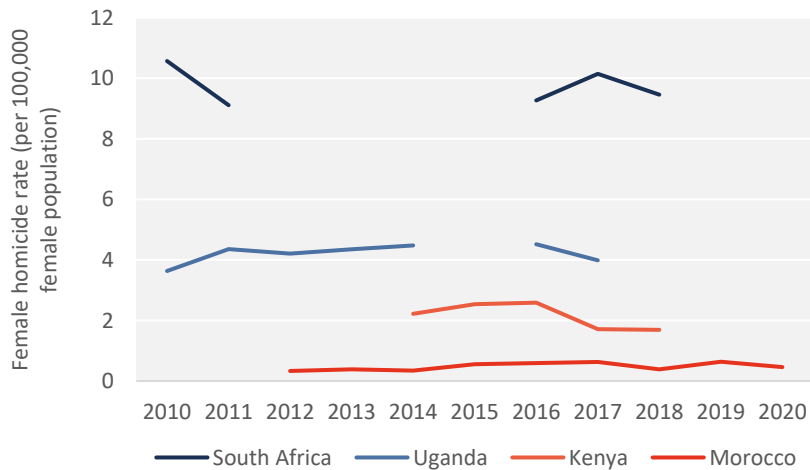
Source: National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, India.

Figure 22: Trend in the rate of female intimate partner/family-related homicide per 100,000 female population in Australia and New Zealand (2014-2020)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset.

Figure 23: Female homicide rates in Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, and Uganda (2010-2020)



Source: UNODC Homicide dataset. Methodological Annex

9. METHODOLOGICAL ANNEX

1. Data

1.1. Data sources

The analysis presented in this brief and the estimates produced at global and regional level are based on data available for 95 countries or territories. For these countries or territories at least one data point on intentional homicides of female victims perpetrated by their intimate partner or other family members was available for the period 2010-2020. These data were primarily submitted to UNODC by Member States through the annual United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS).⁴⁹ The UN-CTS collects administrative data on the total number of homicide victims as well as relevant disaggregations of homicide victims by sex and age, by killing mechanism (firearms, sharp objects and others) and by perpetrator/context of the crime (family/intimate partner, organized crime, gang, robbery, other, unknown context). In most cases, the homicide data are sourced from Member States' criminal justice systems, however, in a few cases the data are sourced from the public health system.⁵⁰

Where needed and applicable, UN-CTS homicide data were supplemented with external data sources, mostly using official sources from Member States or UNODC's Global initiative to improve knowledge of the impact of COVID-19 on crime.⁵¹ Population data used to calculate sex-disaggregated homicide rates (per 100,000 population) were sourced from the United Nations World Population Prospects.⁵²

1.2. Data validation

All homicide data collected through the UN-CTS as well as external data sources were validated to ensure that they meet a set of minimal quality criteria, including consistency with the standard definition of intentional homicide in the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS),⁵³ coherence of country time trends (to ensure the use of data with consistent counting rules and reporting authorities), and internal consistency of homicide disaggregations (for example to ensure the male and female homicides add up to the reported total, or that the reported number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides does not exceed the reported number of female homicides).⁵⁴

1.3. Data coverage

Internationally comparable data on female homicides and female intimate partner/family - related homicides remain patchy, especially in Africa and Asia, but are available for a large enough number of countries and territories to enable the production of global and regional estimates. Table 1 provides an overview of data coverage of these two indicators in the five world regions.

⁴⁹ Available national data accessible at: <https://dataunodc.un.org/content/homicide-country-data>

⁵⁰ See Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019 for more information.

⁵¹ More information available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/coronavirus.html>

⁵² Available at: <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

⁵³ Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/iccs.html>

⁵⁴ For a detailed description of the validation procedure applied to the homicide data, see Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019.

Table 1: Data coverage for female homicides and female intimate partner/family-related homicides by region (2010-2020)

Region	Number of countries/ territories in region	with available data for at least 1 year in the period 2010-20		with available data for at least 3 years in the period 2010-20	
		Female homicide	Female intimate partner/family-related homicide ⁵⁵	Female homicide	Female intimate partner/family-related homicide
Africa	58	15	6	14	5
Americas	54	49	31	48	26
Asia	51	35	17	31	14
Europe	48	43	37	41	32
Oceania	23	9	4	4	2
World	234	151	95	138	79

Source: UNODC homicide dataset

2. Methods

The methods used for estimating the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides at the global and regional level aim to make the best possible use of available data. For each regional aggregate, the number of female intimate partner/family-related homicides should correspond to the sum of all national data of such killings in the region, in each year. However, for many countries, data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides are not available, or data are available only for some years (see Table 1). As a result, the sample of countries with available data is different for each year. If left unaddressed, this issue would result in inconsistencies, as regional aggregates would be drawn from a different set of countries each year.

2.1. Imputation of missing values at the country level

The imputation of missing values at the country level follows a three-step procedure, whereby first, the values in the total homicide series are imputed if missing, second, the total homicide series is used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female homicide series,⁵⁶ and third, the female homicide series is then used to inform the imputation of missing values in the female intimate partner/family-related homicide series.

⁵⁵ In 8 countries (6 in the Americas and 2 in Asia) data on other types of gender-related killings such as 'femicides' or 'feminicides' were used as proxy measures given that reliable data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides are not available. These proxy measures were primarily used to capture information on country-level trends. For a detailed comparison of data on female intimate partner/family-related homicides and 'femicides/feminicides', see The Global Study on Homicide 2019, Booklet 5, p.25

⁵⁶ Coverage for female homicide is generally better compared to female intimate partner/family-related homicide, see Table 1.

1. Imputation of the total homicide series is performed on the country-level *rate* of total homicides per 100,000 population.
2. Imputation of the female homicide series is performed on the country-level *ratio* of female homicides over total homicides (where data on both indicators are available).
3. Imputation of the female intimate partner/family-related homicide series is performed on the country-level *ratio* of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides (where data on both indicators are available).⁵⁷

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

1. If a country has just one available data point in the respective series,⁵⁸ all missing values are set equal to this single available data point. Given that the estimated series is either a rate (if the imputation refers to total homicide) or a ratio based on that rate (if the imputation refers to female homicide or female intimate partner/family-related homicide), this approach accounts for population growth over time and does not mean that the series is constant in absolute terms.
2. If a country has two to eight available data points in the respective series, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the beginning (or end) of the series are filled with the earliest (or latest) available data point.
3. If a country has more than eight available data points in the respective time series, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the end of the time series are imputed using an exponential smoothing approach.⁵⁹

2.2. Estimation of regional aggregates

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

- Regional homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional homicide *rate* per 100,000 population with the total population of the respective region (divided by 100,000).⁶⁰
- Regional female homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional *ratios* of female homicides over total homicides with the total homicides of the respective region.
- Regional totals of female intimate partner/family-related homicide are calculated for each year by applying the regional *ratios* of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides to the total female homicide series of the respective region.

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

2.3. Computation of uncertainty intervals

As explained above, global and regional estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides are produced based on available national data and through a statistical model imputing missing values at the country level. To account for estimation error due to the imputation of missing values at the country level,

⁵⁷ Validation checks ensure that this ratio is lower or equal to one.

⁵⁸ The three-step imputation approach is applied to the period 2000-2020.

⁵⁹ For more information, see https://afit-r.github.io/ts_exp_smoothing

⁶⁰ In order to better reflect the diversity of homicide levels across African countries a different approach was used to calculate the regional homicide estimate for Africa, which rests on the classification of countries into three groups according to levels of insecurity. For more information, see Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019, p.viii.

the global and regional estimates are accompanied by intervals of uncertainty. These bands are intended to represent how the uncertainty due to imputation varies across time and regions. It is important to note that these bands do not represent confidence intervals and should not be interpreted as such. The procedure to compute the uncertainty intervals closely follows the approach used in the *Global Study on Homicide 2019*.⁶¹

For countries and territories with at least one year of data on female intimate partner/family-related homicide (in the period 2010-2020), a penalty of plus and minus 2.6 per cent was added⁶² to the value of each estimate for each year of distance between the estimate and the closest observed female intimate partner/family-related homicide value. For countries and territories without any reported data on female intimate partner/family-related homicide, a maximum “penalty” is applied in the sense that the distance to the closest observed values is assumed to be 10 years. Ranges around global and regional trends were obtained by adding up – for each year – the compounded ranges of all countries that are a part of each regional aggregate. This approach to calculating uncertainty intervals means that countries with fewer years of reported data have wider ranges around the national trend and contribute more to the ranges around the trends of their respective regions. In addition, regions with a greater number of countries without any reported data have even wider ranges.

⁶¹ See Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019, p.ix

⁶² The 2.6 per cent represent the global average change in the ratio of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides. For the two regions with sufficient data coverage, Europe and the Americas, the *regional* average in the ratio of female intimate partner/family-related homicides over total female homicides is used instead (Europe: 2.6 per cent; Americas: 3.1 per cent).