

Lethal Violence against Women and Girls

N THE VERGE of a post-2015 development framework, and in view of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the focus on ending violence against women is ever-present in policy and research agendas. The Council of Europe 2011 Istanbul Convention spells out the obligation to address and prevent violence against women and domestic violence, building on previous international instruments, such as the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).1 The last few years have also seen a convergence of the international agenda on women, peace, and security with that of small arms control, specifically through the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (Bastick and Valasek, 2014).

Yet as countries attempt to forge targeted programmes to tackle and reduce violence against women and girls, that violence remains widespread and enduring, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society at large. Despite the increased awareness, there is a persistent lack of data on the killing of women, whether inside or outside the home. The chronic absence of details on circumstances surrounding female homicides also makes it difficult to understand and tackle the phenomenon effectively. Moreover, the lack of standardized guidelines, categories, and definitions renders cross-country comparisons difficult.

This chapter provides an update on the findings presented in the 2011 edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV) by examining the figures and patterns of lethal violence against women globally and in selected cases. In highlighting the most recent and comprehensive data on female homicide available, it explores intimate partner femicides, conflict-related deaths and sexual violence, and firearm-related killings of women. The chapter finds that:

- On average, based on data available from 104 countries and territories, the GBAV estimates that 60,000 women and girls worldwide were killed violently every year, from 2007 to 2012. These deaths account for approximately 16 per cent of all intentional homicides committed globally.
- Since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the median rate of women killed has decreased slightly and female homicide rates have become polarized, as the number of countries with very high and very low rates of lethal violence against women increased.
- While much of the lethal and non-lethal violence against women and girls takes place in non-conflict settings, the risk of multiple or repeat victimization of women is compounded during conflicts.
- In countries with high rates of firearm-related lethal violence the percentage of women killed with firearms is also higher.

- While the majority of homicide victims are men, women are the primary victims of intimate partner homicide, including homicide suicide events.
- In countries with low levels of female homicide, most killings occur inside the home and are generally perpetrated by an intimate partner or member of the nuclear or extended family.

Beyond the numbers: challenges to collecting data on homicide and violence against women and girls

While considerable progress has been made in collecting and disseminating data on violence, few improvements have been made with respect to obtaining sex-disaggregated statistics (CCPCJ, 2014). Limited availability and accessibility of sex-disaggregated data stems largely from poor reporting practices, an absence of standardized definitions and coding, underreporting, and insufficient resources for training and data collection in relevant state and non-state agencies.

With growing media and public attention to statistics on crime and violence, police, public health, and national statistical institutions have come under increased pressure to publish and share relevant data. In some cases, this trend has helped to shed light on some problematic practices in crime recording, particularly in relation to violence against women. One such procedure, known as 'no-criming', involves the removal of a crime from the record if the victim retracts allegations or police officers conclude that no crime was committed. Indeed, a recent British government report finds that nearly 30 per cent of rape cases that were no-crimed by the Kent Police should not have been (HMIC, 2013, pp. 4, 16).

Meanwhile, a whistleblower provided evidence that London's Metropolitan Police had underrecorded rape and serious sexual offences by up to 25 per cent (BBC, 2013a). Reports from Australia and the United States suggest that recorded crime data for sexual crimes and domestic violence were not comparable across jurisdictions because of different processing practices in initial stages of investigations (Australia, 2009, p. 59; Francescani, 2012).

In the absence of details on circumstances surrounding the killing of women, the accurate recording of femicide has proven difficult (see Box 3.1), as has distinguishing between homicide and other crimes. Suicides can be particularly difficult to categorize. A study of femicide-suicide in Argentina argues that some cases of female homicide and intimate partner femicide are mistakenly recorded as suicides (Fernandez, 2012). In the case of 'honour' crimes, or dowry deaths, some scholars also speak of 'forced suicide' or murder disguised as suicide (UN Women, n.d.). The absence of commonly accepted definitions and coding systems for female homicide, femicide, and intimate partner violence complicates cross-border comparisons.

If data collection on female homicide and violence against women and girls is difficult in nonconflict countries, these efforts are even more precarious in conflict zones. The absence of adequately trained persons to identify and record crime results in patchy record-keeping, if any. Crime data is particularly underreported in conflict areas, where the focus is, understandably, on conflict-related casualties.

Fortunately, some national governments and non-governmental organizations in a number of countries have paid particular attention to improving their data collection practices, with an eye to reducing and preventing violence against women and girls and female homicide. National or subnational observatories on crime and violence collect useful information from a variety of sources. In addition, crowd-sourcing has emerged as a method of gathering and diffusing information

on crimes against women, especially among some local organizations in Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere (HarassMap, n.d.; Hollaback, n.d.; WMC, n.d.). While these tools are innovative, the extent to which they are able to capture the phenomenon remains unknown.

Box 3.1 In search of a label: female homicide, femicide, and intimate femicide

Feminist scholars have argued that the term homicide—defined as the 'intentional killing of a person by another person'—obscures the gendered dimension of the killing of women (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 68; Radford and Russell, 1992; Sagot and Carcedo, 2000). Introduced by the feminist movement in the 1970s and popularized in the 1990s, the term femicide was to expose the hidden power dimension within gender relations. Initially signifying 'the misogynous killing of women by men' (Radford and Russell, 1992, p. 3), the term has since gained traction in the legal, criminology, policy, and political spheres (GHRC, 2009; Spinelli, 2011; UNGA, 2006).

A side effect of this wide dissemination is the dilution of the term to include 'any killings of women or girls', irrespective of the circumstances of the killing (PAHO, 2012). This definition has the advantage of increasing the comparability of figures (Alvazzi del Frate, 2011); however, the use of *femicide* to mean homicide with female victims has its critics. Feminist scholars place *femicide* on the continuum of violence against women or, more specifically, that of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988; Radford and Russell, 1992).

At the international level, there is no commonly agreed definition of femicide, although in some countries legal definitions bring some clarity to the term by stipulating the circumstances under which the killing of a woman qualifies as femicide (CCPCJ, 2014).² The penal codes of Chile and Peru treat femicide as an aggravated form of homicide (ELLA, 2013, p. 3). Other countries, such as Costa Rica and Mexico, have enacted dedicated legislation on combating femicide, defining the crime either as intimate partner femicide (Costa Rica, 2007) or as a particularly

extreme category of crime against women, which culminates in death (Mexico, 2007, art. 21).

Debates over the definition of femicide have also spurred the emergence of related terms. Feminist scholar Marcela Lagarde uses feminicide to encompass the aspect of moral and political responsibility for the killing of women because of their sex. She argues that political and judicial systems also hold a degree of responsibility for not addressing pervasive violence against women and girls and thus enabling, to some extent, their killings (ELLA, 2013, p. 2). Other scholars have opted for a deepening rather than a broadening of the term, adopting 'intimate partner femicide' as the preferred term for the killing of a woman by her current or former partner on the grounds of her sex. Also called uxoricide from the Latin uxor, meaning 'wife'—the killing of a woman by her husband (or intimate partner) is the ultimate expression of inequality within the couple (Spinelli, 2011, p. 18).

In the absence of comparable definitions and reliable cross-sectional, time-series data on femicide, this edition of the GBAV focuses more broadly on *female homicide*, which benefits from a wider availability of sex-disaggregated data. To highlight the need for better information and data collection tools that capture information on femicide, this chapter also provides in-depth analysis of international statistics on *intimate partner femicide*, for which more solid data is available. Widespread patriarchal gender relations within couples determine dynamics of violence, which have similar characteristics in many countries. These dynamics terminate with death of the woman, often after protracted domestic violence or abuse.

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In view of the challenges inherent in the collection of sex-disaggregated data on homicide, this edition of the GBAV draws on a combination of sources, including national statistical reports as well as data from law enforcement and research institutions (see Chapter One). This chapter features information from 104 countries and detailed data from 96 countries and territories.³

PHOTO ▼ Police tape cordons off the body of a young woman, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, September 2011.

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AFP Photo

The state of female homicide in the world

Almost 35 years after the signing of CEDAW and in the run-up to the Beijing+20 commemorations, women continue to face a series of challenges—and that despite substantive improvements in education, equality, and empowerment.⁴ Women

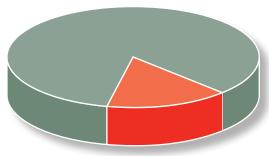
continue to die at the hands of their partners, family members, and strangers, and many more fall victim to sexual, physical, and emotional violence, by virtue of their gender.

The GBAV 2014 database reveals that between 2007 and 2012, on average, 60,000 women were killed violently around the world every year, representing approximately 16 per cent of the global number of intentional homicides (see Figure 3.1).⁵ These figures have decreased slightly compared to the reporting period covered in the 2011 edition of the GBAV. The number of women killed annually dropped from 66,000 to 60,000, and the percentage of women among homicide victims fell from 17 to 16 per cent.

Men are both the primary victims and perpetrators of homicide in the world, accounting for more than



FIGURE 3.1 Estimated global average proportion of female vs. male homicide victims per year, 2007–12



LEGEND:

- Male victims (317,000): 84%
- Female victims (60,000): 16%

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

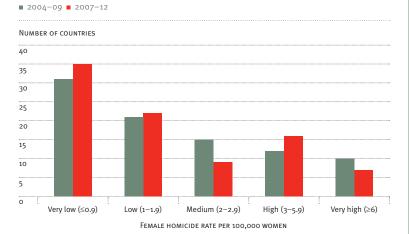
80 per cent of all intentional homicides. In other words, five out of six homicide victims are men, a ratio that has remained almost constant since 2004 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, pp. 117–18). Various explanations have been offered for this 'gender gap' in victimization. Some criminologists argue that gendered lifestyles and social roles—which cast men as titular heads of the family and main economic providers make men more likely than women to become victims of homicide (Lauritsen and Heimer, 2008). Other studies suggest that there is a link between gender and crime perpetration, and that violent crimes, and particularly homicide, follow different dynamics depending on the perpetrator's sex (Lei et al., 2014; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2007). These distinctions raise questions about the determinants of the 'gender gap' for homicide victimization and perpetration.

Although useful in painting a picture of the degree to which men and women are affected by lethal violence, global figures mask a multitude of regional, sub-regional, and national variations. Since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the number of countries with high rates of female homicides

per 100,000 women increased from 12 to 16 (see Figure 3.2). The number of countries with low and very low rates also registered small increases. The most notable change was the drop in the number of countries with medium rates of women killed, from 15 countries down to nine. The average rate of female homicide per 100,000 women for countries studied in the 2011 and current editions of the GBAV fell from 2.48 to 2.27, respectively (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011; 2014).6

The graph suggests a polarization of the distribution of female homicides; while the number of countries with low and very low as well as the high and very high rates generally increased, those with medium rates decreased markedly. These changes may be attributable to shifts in contextual factors that influence female femicide rates, or they may reflect improved reporting practices. A closer examination of country-by-country variations over time is required to assess whether Figure 3.2 is pointing to an emerging trend.

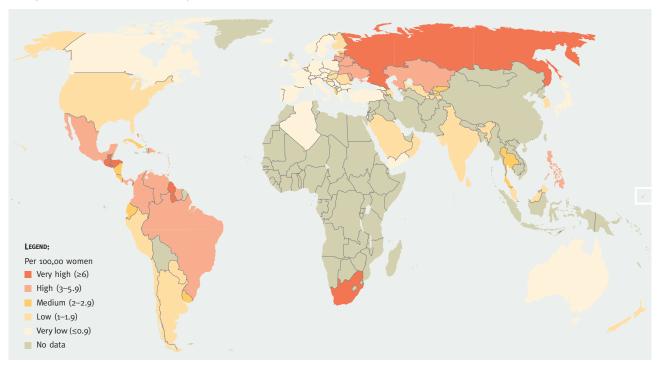
FIGURE 3.2 Number of countries, by average female homicide rate per 100,000 women, 2004–09 and 2007–12



Note: This graph is based on 89 countries and territories, all of which were included in the GBAV 2011 as well as the GBAV 2014 databases.

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

MAP 3.1 Female homicide victims per 100,000 women, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Map 3.1 displays the distribution of female homicides in the 96 countries and territories for which reliable data was available for the 2007–12 time-frame. As was the case for the GBAV 2011 database sex-disaggregated information was unavailable for most African and many Asian countries. This suggests that efforts to improve data collection in these regions have yet to produce accessible data. The absence of information results in unequal global coverage of female homicide. The Americas and Europe have the most developed reporting systems, such that coverage is almost complete for these regions.

At the sub-regional level, Central America and the Caribbean exhibit the highest rates of female homicide. There is little variation across the other regions, with Western Europe ranking at the bottom of the scale (see Figure 3.3). In contrast to variations in the distribution of total homicide rates, the average rate of women killed is relatively flat across North America, most of Europe, and Western Asia. One possible explanation for this finding is that these regions, which exhibit low rates of homicide, can have comparatively higher rates of intimate partner and domestic violence, bringing the ratio of male-to-female homicides closer to 1:1. This tendency was also observed in the 2011 edition of the GBAV.

According to local and international activists, the escalation of lethal violence targeting women in Latin America may be the result of a confluence of factors, from the increased militarization of the

state and society in response to drug wars, which directly affect or even target women, to the persistent machismo culture (NWI, 2012; HBS, 2013). Some also point to impunity and a lack of judicial redress, two factors that perpetuate the cycle of violence (HBS, 2013). Other regions exhibit their own peculiarities. In Asia, for instance, selective abortion of female fetuses and infanticide of baby girls have long been documented as widespread, translating into millions of 'missing women' (Laurent, 2013; Liisanantti and Beese, 2012). In Europe, as well as in many other regions, persistent gender inequality and patriarchal social norms perpetuate violence against women and intimate partner femicide (PAHO, 2012; UNODC, 2014).

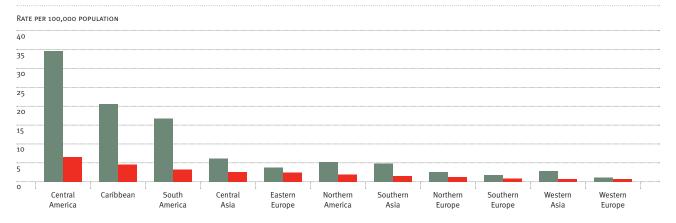
Of the 96 countries for which relevant data is available, 25 display high and very high rates of female homicide, 10 accounting for more than 54 per cent of the total number of women killed in

the period under review. This suggests that female victimization is highly skewed, with approximately one-quarter of the analysed countries accounting for more than half of all female homicides. This finding indicates that the distribution differs slightly from that presented in the 2011 edition of the GBAV, according to which the 25 countries and territories with the highest rates accounted for 47 per cent of the total number of women killed.

A closer examination reveals that two countries—El Salvador and Honduras—stand out with rates of more than ten female homicides per 100,000 women (see Figure 3.4). The rate for El Salvador (14.4 per 100,000 women) is more than double the base rate for the category (6.0 per 100,000). Honduras comes a close second with a rate of 10.9 homicides per 100,000 women. Both countries also rank highest in terms of overall homicide rates, with 73 persons killed per 100,000 population in

FIGURE 3.3 Average homicide and female homicide rates per 100,000 total population, by sub-region, 2007–12

- Total homicide
- Female homicide

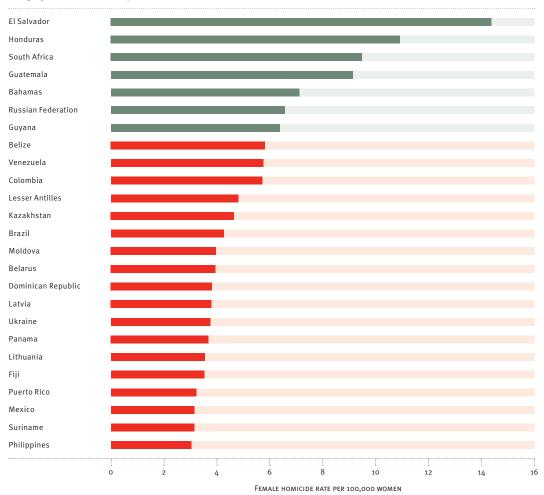


Note: This table features only sub-regions in which more than half the countries have reliable data, namely: Northern America (3/3, i.e. 3 of 3 countries in the sub-region), Central America (8/8), the Caribbean (11/14), South America (13/13), Northern Europe (11/11), Western Europe (9/9), Southern Europe (13/13), Eastern Europe (10/10), Western Asia (11/18), and Central Asia (5/5 countries).

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

FIGURE 3.4 Average high and very high female homicide rates per 100,000 women, 2007-12

- 'very high' >6 female homicides per 100,000 women
- 'high' 3-6 female homicides per 100,000 women



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Honduras and 59 in El Salvador, indicating particularly high mortality rates due to intentional violence. The level of lethal violence affecting women in El Salvador is such that it surpasses the overall rate of male and female homicides in some of the 40 countries with the highest rates worldwide, such as Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Tanzania.

A few countries with small populations, such as the Bahamas and Guyana, exhibit very high rates of women killed violently. From 2007 to 2012, an average of 13 women were killed each year in the Bahamas, while 25 lost their lives annually in Guyana. In the independent countries of the Lesser Antilles sub-region, an average of four

women were killed yearly. The exception is Trinidad and Tobago, where an average of 46 women were killed during each year under review.

Of the 25 countries with the highest rates of women killed, only Colombia, the Philippines, and the Russian Federation are currently affected by conflict (UCDP, n.d.). All the others are non- or post-conflict countries. This is consistent with the finding that, based on available data, the majority of violent deaths of both men and women occur in countries that are not at war (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 44). Still, the dearth of reliable sex-disaggregated data on female homicide in conflict environments obscures the real figures.

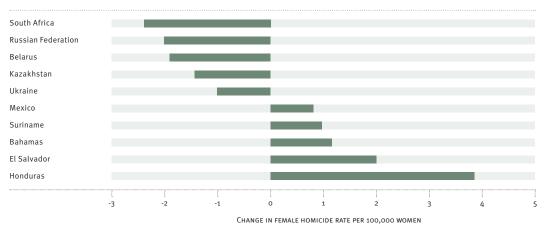
Female homicide through the years: trends and patterns

The lack of reliable historical data on the homicides of women around the world precludes the identification of trends. Yet the GBAV 2014 data-

base offers an opportunity to examine certain changes in lethal violence towards women over the past ten years. Countries for which timeseries trends are available may also be studied.

A comparison of information in the GBAV 2011 and 2014 databases reveals that a number of countries registered noticeable decreases in the rate of female homicide (see Figure 3.5). Similarly, a 2013 study of femicide in South Africa finds that the rate of female homicides decreased by half from 1999 to 2009—from 24.7 to 12.9 (Abrahams et al., 2013). Although the level of total lethal violence towards women has decreased in South Africa over the past ten years, partly due to policy efforts to reduce gender inequality and control the spread of illicit firearms, the level of intimate partner femicide has remained high, supported by social norms that tolerate domestic violence (Abrahams et al., 2013; Jaynes, 2013; Thaler, 2012). This form of violence may thus be much more inelastic than total female homicide and may require more targeted policy approaches. South

FIGURE 3.5 Countries with the greatest decreases and increases in female homicide rates, 2011 vs. 2014



NOTE: The graph shows the five countries with the largest increases and five with the greatest decreases. Another 82 countries that are not shown in this figure registered changes between zero and one or zero and minus one.¹²

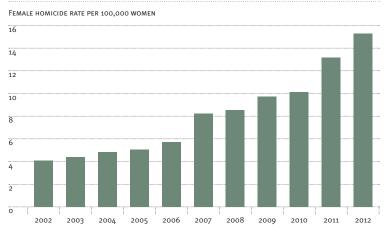
Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Africa still registers some of the highest rates of homicide and female homicide in the world, although these rates are dropping steadily (Jaynes, 2013).

In its official statistics, the Russian Federation has also recorded an important decrease in the overall rates of homicide and female homicide, the latter from almost 13 killings per 100,000 women in the year 2000, to 10 in 2005, and down to around 5 in 2010. Although the rates of female homicide in large Russian cities exceed the national rate, this decreasing pattern holds true for sub-national data on female homicide across the 66 Russian municipalities with female populations of more than 100,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).13 The murder and dismemberment of a Russian journalist by her husband in early 2013, widely covered by the media, drew attention to the persistence of intimate partner violence in the country (Balmforth, 2013; BBC, 2013b; Frolov, 2013).

Another 37 countries, located mostly in Europe and Oceania, display little to no change in homi-

FIGURE 3.6 Female homicide rates per 100,000 women in Honduras, 2002–12



NOTE: For details on the methodology used to calculate the homicide rates based on reported absolute values, see the online annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

Sources: CONADEH (2013, p. 26); Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014); IUDPAS (2013, p. 1)

cide rates, suggesting that crime patterns have remained stable. This also holds true for a number of Asian countries, such as India, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, and Yemen, some of which have persistently high rates of female homicide (such as India and Thailand). Several countries whose female homicide rates were among the highest in the 2011 edition of the GBAV—such as Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Guyana—also appear to be holding steady.

On the other end of the spectrum, Honduras registered by far the largest increase in the rate of female homicide, followed by El Salvador. Countries that witness a high volume of narco-trafficking such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico—are also plagued by rising female homicide rates, which has prompted human rights activists to redub the 'war on drugs' the new 'war on women' (Fox, 2012b). Mano dura (iron fist) interventions, designed to improve security and combat drugrelated violence, can have the opposite effect, inadvertently increasing insecurity among the civilian population, and particularly among women (Carlsen, 2012). Women are targeted as 'drug mules', executed as public messages to the authorities to desist from combating drug trafficking, or killed to settle accounts with rival gangs (Fox, 2012b; Giacomello, 2013; IRIN, 2014).

Spotlight on Honduras: a decade of rising lethal violence against women

A closer look at the evolution of female homicide in Honduras shows a continuous upward trend (see Figure 3.6). The latest figures from the Observatory for Violence in Honduras, IUDPAS, suggest that lethal violence against women continues to escalate in the country, with 629 women killed in 2013, compared to 606 the previous year (IUDPAS, 2014, p. 1). 14 In contrast, the Honduran Commission of Human Rights reported that 441

women had lost their lives in 2013 (CONADEH, 2014). According to IUDPAS, close to 40 per cent of killings took place in a public space, while 28 per cent occurred indoors; more than 75 per cent of these crimes involved the use of a firearm (IUDPAS, 2014, p. 2). This confirms what some human rights activists in Honduras have noted, namely that the majority of female homicides are not related to domestic violence (Pavon and Gallardo, 2012). Rather, some activists link the rise in the number of female homicides to the insecurity generated by the 2009 institutional crisis and the targeting of women human rights activists (NWI, 2012).

However, the female homicide rate started to climb exponentially in 2007, with the largest jumps occurring in 2011 and 2012. By 2012, the female homicide rate had increased by more than 270 per cent, whereas the total homicide rate had increased by 125 per cent since 2000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). This accelerated pattern suggests that multiple contextual factors may be at play, such as the rise in drug and human trafficking and associated activities in the country (Fox, 2012a). An estimated 80 per cent of cocaine and other illegal drugs bound for the United States pass through Honduras, which has consequently witnessed a rise in its female homicide rate (INL, 2013; Fox, 2012b). In Honduras as elsewhere in Central America, the killings are at times characterized by extreme levels of brutality—as evidenced by mutilation and signs of torture on many of the bodies—which tend to indicate that the victims were killed specifically because they were women (Fox, 2012b; Gonzáles Rodríguez, 2012, p. 13; Carcedo, 2011). To stem this tide of female homicide, Honduran authorities recently raised the minimum penalty for femicide to between 30 and 40 years in prison (RESDAL, 2013, p. 93). Yet given that more than 90 per cent of female homicides reportedly go unresolved, a more concerted effort is required (p. 89).

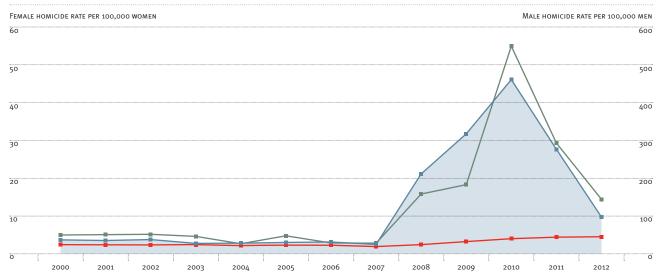
Sub-national data suggests that in many Central American countries, cities have a higher concentration of female homicides than do rural areas. This disparity may not only be due to higher rates of violence in cities, but also to different reporting standards in urban and rural areas. According to IUDPAS data from 2012, nine Honduran municipalities present rates of female homicide that are almost five times higher than the national average, namely Santa Fe (118.3 homicides per 100,000 women), San Fernando (65.9), San Antonio del Norte (72.0), Lauterique (67.1), Sabá (64.9), San Luis (64.1), Cabañas (60.5), Alianza (60.1), and Belén (60.1) (IUDPAS, 2013, p. 2). Similarly, the municipality of Guatemala accounts for more than 20 per cent of women killed in Guatemala in 2012. Taken together, the ten municipalities with the highest female homicides rates in the country account for around 45 per cent of the national figure (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

A lethal city for women: Ciudad Juárez from 2000 to 2012

The Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez attracted international attention in 1993 with a series of brutal murders of women and, in 2008, with a considerable spike in the local femicide rate, which was well above the national average (Alvazzi del Frate, 2011; Al, 2003). Since then some observers have challenged the focus on the 'Juárez femicides', arguing that the phenomenon was awarded disproportionate attention compared to overall victimization or circumstances of the killings (Hooks, 2014; Wright, 2011; Albuquerque and Vemala, 2008). Yet while men continue to be the primary victims of violence in Juárez, the rise in the rate of female victims is significant.

FIGURE 3.7 Female homicide rates per 100,000 women in Juárez and Mexico, and male homicide rates per 100,000 men in Juárez, 2000–12

■ Female homicides in Juárez ■ Female homicides in Mexico ■ Male homicides in Juárez



NOTE: For representational purposes, female homicides are depicted on the primary axis (left), and male homicides on the secondary axis (right).

Source: INEGI (n.d.)

The rate of women killed in Juárez continued to rise after 2009, reaching almost 60.0 per 100,000 in 2010, before decreasing in 2011 and 2012, and dropping back to 2008 levels (see Figure 3.7). The year 2010 saw a spike in homicides involving both men and women victims (INEGI, n.d.).

In addition to the extremely elevated homicide rates, the notoriety of Ciudad Juárez is also due to the violent circumstances surrounding the killings, with victims showing signs of torture and mutilation before being dumped in public places (Pineda-Madrid, 2011, pp. 12–13). According to the Juárez Observatory of Violence, almost half (48 per cent) of the 673 female homicides registered between 2009 and 2012 took place in the street or in a public area, followed by private residences (25 per cent) and commercial areas (7 per cent) (OSCCMJ, 2013, p. 20). Other analysts have under-

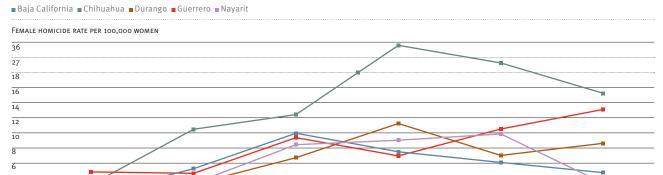
scored that many of the victims belonged to the poor working class (often employed in the *maquila* industry) (Wright, 2013).¹⁵

Not all regions in Mexico are affected by violence in the same way over time. In 2012, the state of Chihuahua, which includes Ciudad Juárez, had the highest rate of female homicide—15.2 per 100,000 women—which is almost four times the national average for the year. And, although the rate is still the highest among federal states, it has decreased substantially since 2010, when it had reached 34.0 per 100,000 women (almost ten times the national average for 2010). In contrast, the female homicide rate in the state of Guerrero increased steadily in 2011 and 2012 (see Figure 3.8). In 2012, two other states exhibited rates of female homicide that remained higher than the national average despite a decrease compared to

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FIGURE 3.8 Female homicide rate per 100,000 women in the five most violent states in Mexico, 2007–12

2009



Source: INEGI (n.d.)

2007

the previous year: Durango (8.6) and Baja California (4.7). In addition, women in Juárez and other cities across Mexico also suffer from forms of non-lethal violence, such as physical and sexual violence, the full extents of which remain unclear.

2008

Women killed in conflict settings: difficulties in establishing trends

In non-conflict settings, lethal violence against women is generally captured under the label of intentional homicide, intimate partner femicide, or female homicide. In countries plagued by conflict, victimization takes a variety of different forms. Like men, women can become victims of direct conflict deaths (as combatants or as civilians); they can also become indirect victims of conflicts, including by bearing the burden of displacement or reintegration. Data scarcity is particularly dire in conflict and post-conflict countries, due to a volatile security situation, an absence of resources, and shifting priorities. Even where conflict data

is available, sex-disaggregated data is rare and when published, it is usually by either UN bodies or local human rights research institutions.

2010

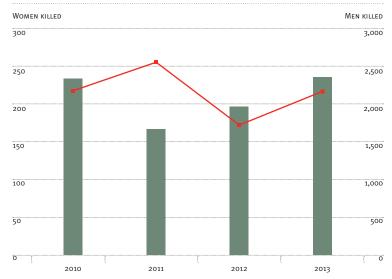
2011

2012

For instance, the Israeli non-governmental organization B'Tselem collects data on both Israeli and Palestinian casualties disaggregated by sex, in Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories. It found that from 2000 to 2008—before Israel launched Operation 'Cast Lead',16 also known as the Gaza War-security forces killed 221 Israeli and 147 Palestinian women. Subsequently, the three-week operation reportedly claimed the lives of 110 Palestinian women, two of whom were police officers, and one Israeli woman. From the conclusion of 'Cast Lead' in January 2009 until 7 July 2014, five Israeli and 19 Palestinian women fell victim to Palestinian and Israeli forces, respectively (B'Tselem, n.d.a-c). During Operation 'Protective Edge', from 8 July to 10 August 2014, 200 women below the age of 60 were reportedly killed (B'Tselem, n.d.d). These figures suggest that lethal violence affecting women is more concentrated during conflict than non- or post-conflict periods.

FIGURE 3.9 Number of women and men killed in Afghanistan, by sex of the victim, 2010–13

■ Women killed ■ Men killed



NOTE: For representational purposes, the number of men killed in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013 is displayed on the secondary axis.

SOURCE: UNAMA (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014)

Since 2011, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has recorded a steady increase in conflict-related deaths of women (see Figure 3.9). The proportion of female-to-male casualties remains skewed, as men are the primary victims of violence in the country. Yet, in 2013, 235 women were reportedly killed, up from 196 in 2011 (UNAMA, 2014, p. 11). This increase corresponds to the intensification of the war, and more frequent Taliban attacks.

For every woman killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) or in ground engagements in 2013, two more were injured (UNAMA, 2014, p. 11). Women were killed or injured as they carried out their daily activities, in their homes, while travelling, or while working in the fields (AP, 2014; UNAMA, 2014). These findings suggest

an increased militarization of public space in Afghanistan, largely due to the planting of IEDs in public areas and the use of suicide bombers, both of which result in a marked decrease in security for all civilians, including children.

While some data on civilian casualties is recorded, little is known about the magnitude of female homicide and violence against women in the country. From March to September 2012 the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission registered 889 incidents of physical violence and 256 cases of sexual violence (Hasrat and Pfefferle, 2012, pp. 4-5). Various NGOs and international organizations have argued that Afghan women are habitually confronted by violence outside the conflict setting, particularly in the domestic sphere (APHI et al., 2011; Habib, 2012). In a 2013 study, the World Health Organization finds that more than one-third of the world's women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence during their lifetimes (WHO, 2013). These figures vary according to geographical location and context (see Box 3.2).

Weapons used in lethal violence against women

The instruments used in the killing of women vary depending on the contexts, types of perpetrators, and circumstances of the crimes. This section explores some of this variation, looking at the use of firearms in intimate partner violence as well as in female homicide. While it is known that firearms are frequently used in the killing of men, their use in female homicide is underresearched. Some recent studies have identified statistically significant links between gun ownership and firearm-related deaths (Bangalore and Messerli, 2013; Siegel, Ross, and King, 2013).

Box 3.2 Sexual violence against women during war

Of the UN Security Council resolutions dealing with women, peace, and security, four specifically focus on sexual violence in war.¹⁷ This framework calls special attention to sexual violence that is 'used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations' (UNSC, 2008, art. 1). In defining 'crimes against humanity', the International Criminal Court—whose rulings have shaped the legal definition of sexual violence—refers to a broad category of sexual acts, including 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' (ICC, 2002, art. 7(1)(g)). More recently, scholars and analysts have added sexual mutilation and sexual torture to this list (Wood, 2009; Cohen and Nordås, 2013, p. 7).

Sexual violence varies across different types of armed conflict: it occurs in both inter-state and intra-state wars, those characterized by ethnic mobilization, those that involve genocide, and secessionist wars (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006; Mullins, 2009; Wood, 2012). Sexual violence also varies across regions, with incidents reported in almost every region of the globe during the time period 1980-2009. Data from the US State Department indicates that, on a per-conflict basis, sexual violence—and rape in particular—was more frequent in wars in Eastern Europe than in sub-Saharan Africa, even though the latter region experienced the largest number of wars during the period (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, p. 3). Recent data on sexual violence in 129 active conflicts and 625 armed actors shows that reports of sexual violence were either numerous or widespread in 18 conflicts (14 per cent), while no such reports appeared in 55 conflicts (43 per cent) (Cohen and Nordås, 2014, p. 423).

Opinions on the evolution of conflict-related sexual violence vary. The lack of relevant data prevents the distillation of global patterns (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013; Roth, Guberek, and Hoover Green, 2011). It is possible that increases in the reporting of rape cases during conflicts are sometimes interpreted as a rise in the number of incidents (HSRP, 2012). The focus on armed actors can also obscure instances of

civilian or non-combatant sexual violence. This is problematic since in some cases of armed conflict—such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—the incidence of intimate partner sexual violence is much higher than the overall rate of reported rape (Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp, 2011).

Reports on sexual violence in times of war indicate that men are the primary perpetrators of these crimes, and that they tend to be members of non-state armed groups. Recent studies have questioned both of these assumptions. Of the 625 actors active from 1989 to 2009, 42 per cent of state actors (56 of 132) reportedly perpetrated sexual violence, in contrast to 24 per cent of non-state armed groups (65 of 275) and 17 per cent of pro-government militias (38 of 218) (Cohen and Nordås, 2014, p. 423). These findings suggest that non-state armed groups are not necessarily the predominant perpetrators of sexual violence in war (Green et al., 2013; Leiby, 2009; Nordås and Cohen, 2012).

Surveys on sexual violence rarely inquire about the sex of the perpetrator or of the victim; instead, they tend to assume that perpetrators are men, thereby fostering the view that men are the sole perpetrators of sexual violence in war (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, p. 3). Recent research focusing on women as active participants in armed conflict—whether as part of national armed forces, members of armed groups, or individuals—questions this assumption, underscoring that wartime sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, is common and perpetrated by men as well as women (Cohen, 2013).

Researchers are paying increasing attention to the social context in which sexual violence takes place in war. For instance, studies on the internal dynamics of non-state armed groups have shown that women's participation in and experience of sexual violence is not homogenous but rather shaped by their status within a group (Marks, 2013). Moreover, it appears that sexual violence is not solely, or necessarily primarily, committed by combatants—whether male or female; indeed, it is often perpetrated by individuals known to the victim, such as intimate partners or acquaintances (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, pp. 6–7).

Author: Jovana Carapic

However, research suggests that more factors come into play in the use of firearms and other weapons in female homicides (Killias and Markwalder, 2012).

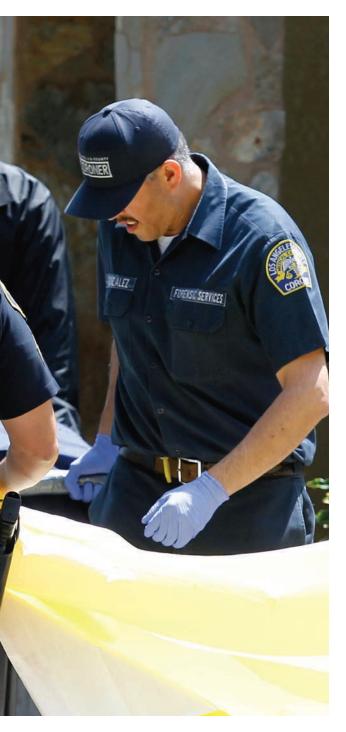
The presence of a gun in the home can influence lethal violence against women in several ways. Austria, Finland, and Switzerland have very high civilian firearms ownership rates, although the overall rate of murders committed with firearms remains low compared to the world average (Small Arms Survey, 2007). In some cases the presence of a firearm in the home was found to be an important risk factor for intimate partner femicide, or serious injury resulting from intimate partner violence, particularly when compared with other types of weapons (Shaw, 2013, p. 25). Though there is a lack of data on non-fatal firearms injuries sustained by women, research suggests that lethal incidents form just a small part of overall female victimization (p. 29).

More frequently, guns are used to intimidate and coerce women, yet such cases are severely underreported (Hemenway, 2011, p. 5; Shaw, 2013, p. 29). A pilot survey on removing guns from batterers in California found that women felt safer as a result of the policy (Frattaroli, 2009; Vittes et al., 2013). Accordingly, some US states implemented legislation on court-ordered or police removal of guns from people with a record of intimate partner violence (Frattaroli, 2009; Frattaroli and Vernick, 2006).

Moreover, the presence of a gun in the home has been associated with an increased risk of suicide for the gun owner, spouse, and any children (Hemenway, 2011, p. 3). The lethality of firearms, together with the frequent impulsiveness of suicide, increases the risk of fatality in suicide attempts in the United States and elsewhere (Lewiecki and Miller, 2013). The risk posed by the availability of a gun in the home also applies to homicide—suicide events, which are among gun-related

PHOTO ► Forensic specialists remove a body from the scene of a homicide—suicide incident that left four dead, California, May 2014. © Alex Gallardo/Reuters



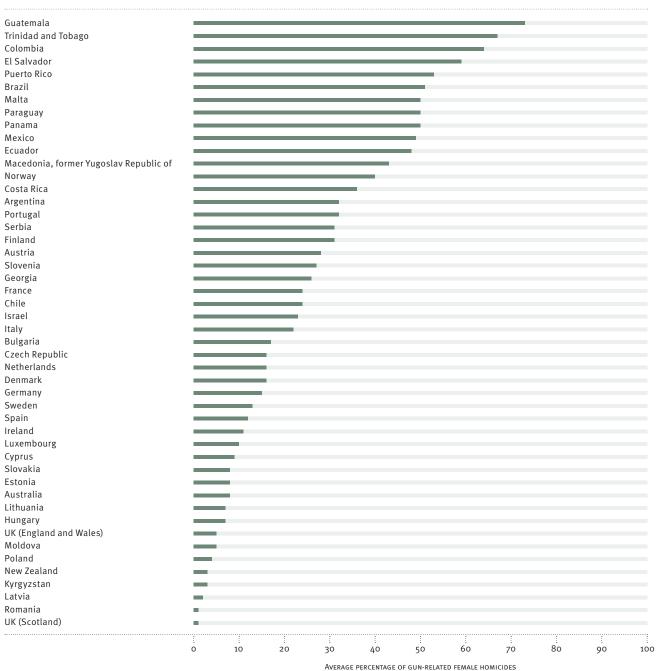


homicides committed in the family sphere, and which typically involve intimate partners. This risk of fatalities increases in the case of homicidesuicide in the domestic sphere. According to one study on firearm-related homicides in Switzerland, firearms were used in 80 per cent of the cases in which homicides were followed by the suicide of the perpetrator (Killias and Markwalder, 2012). Of the 85 persons who were killed in homicidesuicide events recorded in Switzerland in 1991-2008, the majority (62) were women (Panczak et al., 2013). Military firearms were the most frequently used types of weapons in these cases (Grabherr et al., 2010).18 A study on homicidesuicide events in the United States found that more than 1,300 people died in such circumstances in 2011 alone, that more than 90 per cent of cases involved the use of a gun, and that 94 per cent of the victims were women (Shaw, 2013, p. 27; VPC, 2012, p. 12).

In some cases, firearms are the primary instruments involved in female homicides. In nine of the 50 countries for which reliable data is available for the period 2007–12, more than 50 per cent of female homicides were firearm-related (see Figure 3.10). With the exception of Malta, the ten countries with the highest percentages of firearm-related female homicides are located in Latin America. This is consistent with a recent study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, which concludes that the Americas had the largest proportion of gun use in homicides (UNODC, 2014).

In 2011, more than 60 per cent of female homicides in El Salvador involved the use of firearms (ISDEMU, 2012, p. 9). Similarly, firearms were the most common weapons used in homicides in Brazil, accounting for 72 per cent of male and 49 per cent of female victims in 2010. A higher

FIGURE 3.10 Average percentage of female homicides committed with firearms in 48 countries, 2007–12



percentage of Brazilian women (26 per cent) were killed with bladed or penetrating weapons as compared to men (15 per cent) (Waiselfisz, 2012, p. 10).

In Guatemala, a large percentage of male and female homicides are committed with firearms each year (see Figure 3.11). In 2010 close to 77 per cent of all female homicides and 85 per cent of male homicides involved the use of a gun. The years 2011 and 2012 registered decreases in the overall number of men and women killed, as well as a drop in the percentage of homicides involving firearms.

This drop in firearm-related homicides in Guate-mala is attributed to a confluence of factors, including increased attendance among primary and secondary school students, civil society-led programmes for the reduction of armed violence, the implementation of programmes and policies targeting areas with the highest crime rates, the improvement of criminal investigations and prosecutions, and the adoption and application of the 2009 Law for Arms and Munitions (IEPADES, 2013, p. 32).

In Italy one-third of all female homicides recorded from 2000 to 2012—1,570 killings—involved the use of a firearm; bladed weapons were used in another third, blunt instruments in about 13 per cent, and various forms of physical violence—such as strangulation, beating, or drowning—in the remaining incidents (lezzi, 2013, pp. 54, 57). In countries with low firearm ownership rates, knives were the primary instruments of homicide involving both male and female victims. In 2011–12 in the United Kingdom, where 39 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women were killed with knives, only 9 per cent of male and 4 per cent of female homicides involved the use of firearms (ONS, 2013, p. 28).



 \blacksquare Percentage of female homicides \blacksquare Percentage of male homicides

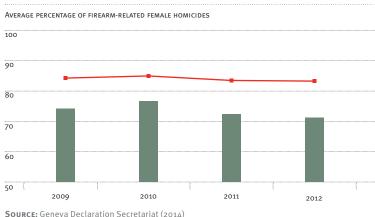
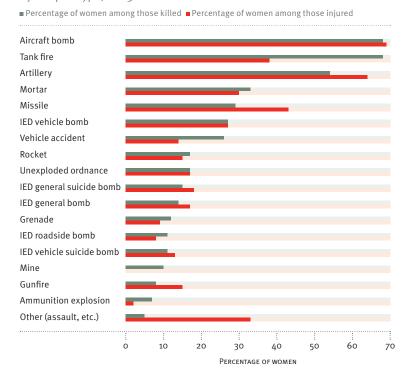


FIGURE 3.12 Proportion of women among those killed and injured in Iraq, by weapon type, 2003–11



Source: Moyes (2012)

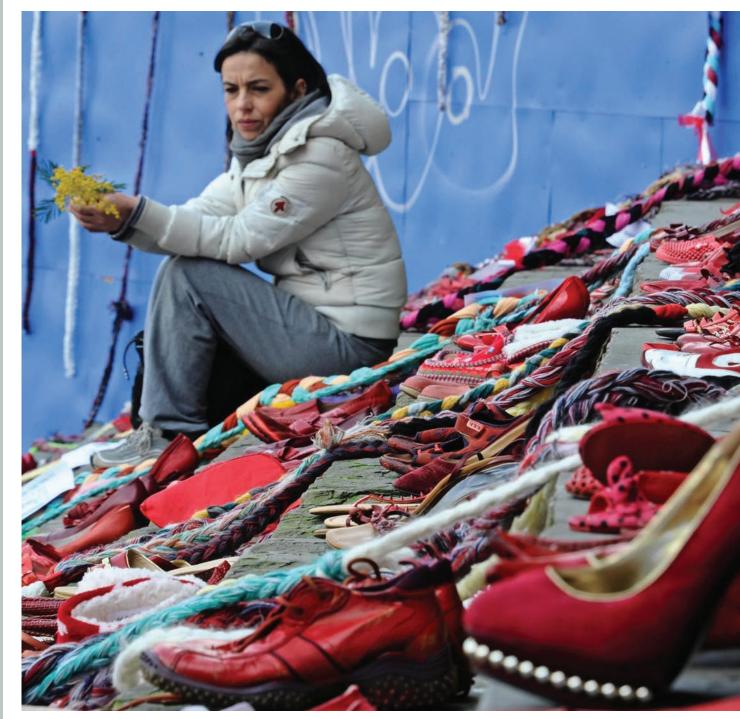
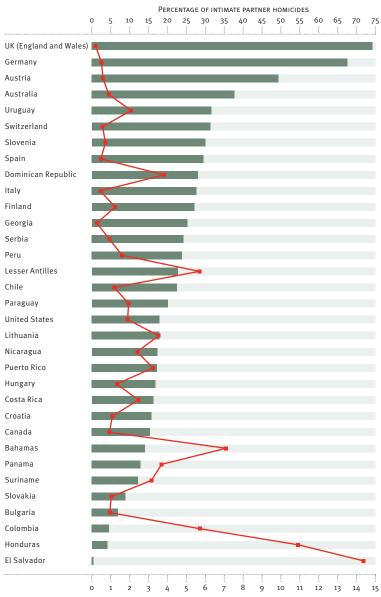


PHOTO ▲ Red shoes line the steps of the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata to raise awareness of violence against women during International Women's Day, Florence, March 2014. © Maurizio Degl' Innocenti/ANSA



FIGURE 3.13 Total female homicide rates per 100,000 women and estimated percentages of intimate partner femicide in selected countries and territories, 2007–12

■ Percentage of intimate partner femicide ■ Female homicide average rate for 2007–12



HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 WOMEN

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Weapons of war and female casualties

In conflict settings, numerous women are killed by IEDs, explosive remnants of war, and artillery fire. In Afghanistan in 2013, for instance, IEDs claimed the lives of 177 women (out of 235 killed), 20 per

cent more than in 2012 (UNAMA, 2014). Small arms fire that occurs in ground engagements primarily affects combatants and causes fewer civilian casualties than explosives do. In Iraq, women were the principal victims of aircraft bombs as well as

Box 3.3 Gender and the Arms Trade Treaty

On 2 April 2013 UN member states adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding global instrument regulating the international transfer of conventional arms and ammunition. The central provision of the treaty requires states parties to assess the risk that weapons to be exported might be used to commit or facilitate certain wrongful acts, including a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) or human rights law, and to deny the authorization of exports if there is an 'overriding risk' of such consequences (UNGA, 2013, arts. 7(1)(b)(i)–(ii), 7(3)).

Certain acts of violence against women are recognized as a violation of human rights. Gender-based and sexual violence during conflict have also been categorized as crimes against humanity and war crimes, that is, serious violations of IHL. Accordingly, Article 7(1) of the ATT implicitly addresses violence against women through references to serious violations of IHL and human rights law. Nevertheless, the treaty includes a further requirement that states parties take into account the risk of arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children as part of an export assessment (UNGA, 2013, art. 7(4)).

For those who lobbied for the inclusion of specific references to 'gender-based violence' and violence against women, these references in the ATT represent a coup, especially given the strong resistance to their incorporation by several states. ²¹ However, the explicit references to 'gender-based violence' and to violence against women in the ATT also have negative consequences. First, the ATT highlights violence against women as a human rights concern

above other human rights violations that might be committed with the exported weapons, but that are not explicitly mentioned in the treaty.

Second, the placement of the reference to gender-based violence in a separate paragraph *after* the main criteria listed in Article 7(1) could lead states to distinguish it from the category of 'risks' to which it might otherwise belong, namely serious violations of IHL and human rights law. If the reference to gender-based violence had instead been included as an example of a serious violation of IHL or human rights law in Article 7(1), the treaty would clearly have acknowledged the relationship and ensured that states parties would be required to deny exports if they detected an overriding risk of such violence.²²

Third, the phrasing of the provision leaves it open to interpretation. The requirement to 'take into account' the risk of the arms being used for genderbased violence 'in making this assessment' could imply this is one of the 'relevant factors' states parties must take into account when making the export assessment under Article 7(1). This would lead to a denial of an export if a determination were made that there was an overriding risk of, for example, a serious violation of human rights law in the form of violence against women. However, as it stands, the provision could be interpreted as simply requiring states parties to consider the possibility that arms to be exported could be used to commit violence against women without a corresponding requirement for them not to authorize the export. In other words, 'it does leave scope to argue that denial is not always required' (Green et al., 2013, p. 559).

Author: Sarah Parker

tank and artillery fire between 2003 and 2011 (see Figure 3.12). In contrast, mines, gunfire, and ammunition explosions affected mostly men in the same period.

Death in the family: intimate partner and intimate circle femicide

Femicide remains firmly anchored in the continuum of gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and domestic violence. To supplement this chapter's focus on female homicide, this section examines intimate partner violence and, particularly, intimate partner femicide.

In countries with low and very low rates of female homicide, intimate partners account for the majority of perpetrators—more than 60 per cent in some countries (see Figure 3.13). In societies that experience low levels of homicidal crime, intimate partner femicide may thus be seen as a subset of female homicide that is more difficult to tackle. In Colombia, El Salvador, and Honduras, where female homicide rates are extremely high, intimate partner femicide is responsible for only a fraction of all victims of female homicide. In these contexts, women face a higher risk of becoming victims of violence outside the private sphere.

Although men account for the majority of homicide victims worldwide, women are the primary victims of intimate partner violence and intimate partner femicide (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014; Stöckl et al., 2013).

Recent studies have found that nearly 20 per cent of women in Western Europe have experienced some type of intimate partner violence, while in Eastern Europe this figure is closer to 27 per cent (WHO, 2013, p. 47). The increased policy and

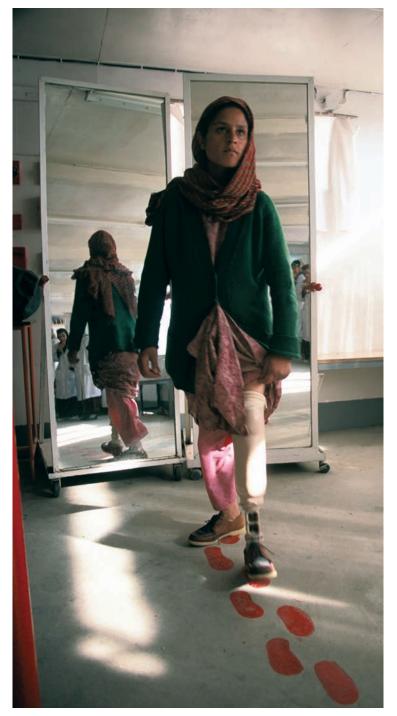
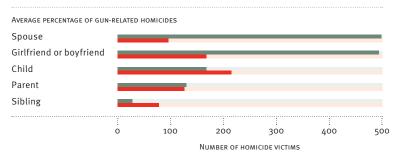


PHOTO ▲ A victim of a landmine explosion learns to walk again, Afghanistan. © Nikolai Ignatiev/Getty Images

FIGURE 3.14 Number of victims of intimate circle homicide by sex and victim's relationship to the perpetrator, United States, 2012

■ Female victims ■ Male victims



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

research attention on intimate partner violence has resulted in a flurry of studies and data collection initiatives. But while case studies abound, few have attempted to provide a regional or global overview of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and intimate partner femicide (UNODC, 2014; Stöckl et al., 2013). Given the scarcity of sex-disaggregated data on victim—perpetrator relationships, many studies fail to distinguish between male and female victims of intimate partner femicide and opt for inclusive definitions of 'intimate partner' to include both current and former partners (Norman and Bradshaw, 2013).

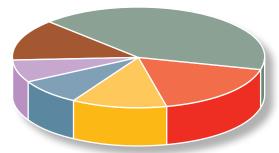
A closer look at two case studies with rich information on the circumstances of homicide, disaggregated by sex of the victims, underlines the need for similarly in-depth information across countries. In the United States, in 2012, women accounted for the majority of intimate partner homicide victims. While women were overwhelmingly killed by their intimate partners, men were more frequently killed by their children or other relatives (see Figure 3.14).

These findings make the case for a closer investigation of homicide that occurs within the 'intimate circle'—that is, in the family sphere—not just in

intimate partner relationships. It also underlines the need for collecting data on both male and female victims of lethal intimate partner violence and on groups that may be more at risk. A 2010 survey on intimate partner violence in the United States finds that some sub-populations, such as racial or ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and households with low income and food security, were disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence (CDC, 2013; 2014).

In Italy, about three-quarters (74 per cent) of the 126 female homicides recorded by Casa delle Donne in 2012 occurred within the intimate family sphere—inside the couple or nuclear family—while the remaining cases were committed by acquaintances, such as colleagues or friends (Casa delle Donne, 2013, p. 22). While the number of documented killings of women increased to 135 in 2013, the distribution by perpetrators remained similar (Casa delle Donne, 2014, p. 12).

FIGURE 3.15 Intimate circle female homicide in Italy, 2000–11, by type of victim's relationship to the perpetrator



LEGEND:

- Spouse or live-in partner: 41.6%
- Ex-spouse or ex-partner: 17.6%
- Mother or stepmother: 12.1%
- Daughter or stepdaughter: 8.5%
- Partner or lover: 7.1%
- Other relatives: 13.2%

Source: EURES and ANSA (2012, p. 13)

Box 3.4 'Honour' killings in the family sphere

'Honour' killings are grossly underreported and underdocumented (UNGA, 2012, art. 44.). The planning and execution of such homicides often involves several family members rather than a single perpetrator, which makes the crimes even more difficult to identify, investigate, and prosecute (Belfrage et al., 2012). As is the case with other forms of femicide, they are usually preceded by episodes of non-lethal violence.

Although they lack a universally accepted definition, 'honour' killings may be described as 'acts of violence perpetrated upon a woman when an honour code is believed to have been broken and perceived shame is brought upon the family' (Meetoo and Mirza, 2007, p. 187). In most cases, women and girls are the victims and men are the perpetrators of such crimes (Hague, Gill, and Begikhani, 2013, p. 385).²³ Triggers for 'honour' killings include a variety of circumstances, such as if a woman is suspected to have committed adultery, engaged in premarital sex, or become pregnant as a result of adultery or rape, or if she has fallen in love 'with an inappropriate person', dresses 'in a manner unacceptable to family or community', or seeks to 'terminate arranged marriage' (Elakkary et al., 2014, p. 76; Belfrage et al., 2012, p. 21).

As a form of femicide, the killing of a woman under the pretext of honour tends to follow other types of family, domestic, or intimate partner violence that also occur in the name of 'honour', including physical violence and psychological abuse. In some cases, the

killings are disguised as suicides or accidents, which precludes an understanding of the prevalence of this phenomenon (Laviosa, 2010).

Some 'honour' killings may be carried out in public, such that they might influence 'the conduct of other women' (UNGA, 2006, para. 84). In principle, these homicides can be distinguished from intimate partner killings (Oberwittler and Kasselt, 2011, p. 6); however, lines can blur, as is the case in Pakistan, where 40 per cent of the 'honour' killings of married women are carried out by their husbands (HRCP, 2012, p. 167). Distinguishing between 'crimes of passion' associated with individual violent behaviour and 'crimes of honour' arising from cultural traditions therefore remains problematic (UNGA, 2012, art. 23: Pope, 2011, p. 21).

'Crimes of passion' and other forms of domestic violence differ from 'honour' killings in that the latter tend to involve members of the extended family—such as in-laws, uncles, and cousins—as well as the broader community (Chesler, 2010; Meetoo and Mirza, 2007, p. 187). Unlike in dowry killings, women are typically killed by their families of origin and perpetrators may include minors (Chesler, 2010; HRCP, 2012, p. 68).

To tackle 'honour crimes' some countries, including Turkey, have enforced harsher penal codes while others, such as Sweden, have supported training programmes to assist police officers in recognizing and combating these crimes (Belfrage et al., 2012). Meanwhile, the magnitude of 'honour' killings worldwide remains unknown.

Author: Hannah Donges



PHOTO ▲ Demonstrators protest against the killing of a pregnant woman who was stoned and beaten to death by her family for marrying against their wishes, Islamabad, May 2014. © Faisal Mahmood/Reuters

Time-series data on female homicide in Italy supports this finding on the predominance of partners as perpetrators of crimes in the extended family circle. Of the 1,459 female homicides registered between 2000 and 2011, more than 66 per cent took place within the couple, involving a spouse or live-in partner, ex-partner, or lover; another 20 per cent occurred within the nuclear family and involved parents and children (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 13; see Figure 3.15).

The same time-series data reveals that more than 80 per cent of the 1,459 domestic female homicides that took place in Italy between 2000 and 2011 occurred in the home, yet only about 6 per cent were committed in towns (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 17; lezzi, 2013, p. 58). The motives recorded for family homicides in Italy range from 'crime of passion' to quarrels or disagreements, raptus, 24 money-related disputes, and mental health issues (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 15; lezzi, 2013, p. 56). Yet not all family femicides or intimate partner femicides can be attributed to these motives; 'honour crimes', for instance, may have other root causes (see Box 3.4).

Intimate partner violence and domestic violence in conflict settings

Intimate partner violence and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict settings are linked in complex ways. Recent research underscores the need for a holistic approach to understand how these phenomena are related and to challenge the 'prioritization' of conflict-related violence, as perpetrated by combatants, over domestic violence, as perpetrated by intimate partners in conflict settings (Babalola, Gill-Bailey, and Dodo, 2014; Hossain et al., 2014a; 2014b; McWilliams and Ní Aoláin, 2013).

Although data on intimate partner violence and family violence in conflict settings is scarce, country-based studies suggest that female victimization is compounded. By leading women to take on the roles of combatants, heads of household, or wage earners, conflict can challenge the 'classical patriarchy' and facilitate a certain empowerment of women. However, this dynamic has been found to increase violence against women in some cases, especially if men support patriarchal views, as in Afghanistan (Fluri, 2010, p. 285).

Furthermore, the exposure to wartime violence can also translate into violence within the home or within the couple. A study on intimate partner violence in Palestine finds that exposure to political violence significantly increased the odds of intimate partner violence (Clark et al., 2010), but this dynamic extends across societies. A study in northern Uganda concludes that women who experienced violence during the conflict were at much higher risk of multiple or repeat victimization at the hands of family members or intimate partners (Annan and Brier, 2010). In May 2013, the brutal murder of a woman by her husband, a doctor in a town in South Sudan, called attention to the persistence of intimate partner violence in conflict-affected societies, not just in households that had been directly affected by violence (SIHA Network, 2013).

Besides direct victimization, women in conflict settings also experience lasting effects of intimate partner violence and wartime violence. A study of the effects of wartime violence and intimate partner violence among women refugees at the Thai–Burma border identifies a link between these types of violence and pregnancy complications (Falb et al., 2014). Conflict-related trauma has also been linked to suicide in Afghan women, particularly through self-immolation (Aziz, 2011).

To tackle domestic violence in conflict settings, some organizations, including the UN, and scholars have proposed working more closely with men, rather than solely with women (Vess et al., 2013). A successful pilot programme in Côte d'Ivoire that targeted men recorded reductions in intimate partner violence in the control group after the intervention (Hossain et al., 2014a).

Conclusion

The global picture of lethal violence against women remains incomplete. While some countries have made progress in data collection methods and increased the availability of sex-disaggregated information on homicides, others—particularly in Asia and Africa—are still under-researched.

This chapter calls attention to variations in female homicide rates, highlighting improvements as well as deterioration. Since the publication of the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the distribution of female homicide has become more polarized, with the number of countries with low or very low and high or very high rates of female homicide generally increasing, while those in the middle category decreased substantially. The 25 most violent countries towards women account for more than half of all women killed over the past five years. Of the countries where reliable information is available, those located in Central America and the Caribbean exhibit the highest rates of female homicide for the period 2007–12.

The instruments used in female homicides vary widely across contexts and regions. Women are killed with firearms, knives, or brute force, depending on the circumstances of the incident, the type of perpetrator, and other contextual factors, such as the presence of firearms in the home. In some conflict settings, the risk of women falling victim

to IEDs, explosive remnants of war, or artillery fire is higher than that for small arms. The wide variety of factors at play in femicide calls for a broad set of context-specific policy mechanisms to curb lethal violence against women worldwide.

In many countries women continue to die disproportionately at the hands of their partners as well as members of their nuclear and extended families. Intimate partner femicide shows little variation across time and regions: it remains generally inelastic, suggesting that more targeted policies are needed to reduce this type of 'hidden' violence. In countries with high levels of societal violence, the circumstances of female homicide are markedly different, with a higher proportion of women killed by unknown perpetrators than by their husbands or family members; moreover, the killings are generally perpetrated in public spaces, rather than inside the home—in contrast to intimate partner and family femicide.

List of abbreviations

ATT Arms Trade Treaty

GBAV Global Burden of Armed Violence
IED Improvised explosive device

IUDPAS Instituto Universitario en Democracia, Paz y Seguridad

Endnotes

- Signed in 1979, the Convention contains an agenda for national action to tackle discrimination and ensure gender equality (CEDAW, 1979).
- Article 148 Bis of the decree amending the Mexican penal code to include femicide—referred to as feminicide—as a crime stipulates that the offence occurs when: '(i) The victim presents signs of sexual violence of any kind; (ii) The victim suffered dishonouring or degrading injuries or mutilations before or after she was killed; (iii) It is known that the perpetrator threatened, harassed or injured the victim or used violence against her; (iv) The victim's body was exposed, discarded or thrown out in a public place; or

- (v) The victim was confined for any length of time before her death' (Mexico, 2011, p. 14; translation: IRB, 2011).
- For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.
- For more information on the situation of women worldwide in 2014, see the speech delivered by the executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the UN commemoration of International Women's Day 2014 (UN Women, 2014).
- 5 In calculating the global number of female homicide victims, regional rates were applied to countries for which data was missing or unreliable.
- 6 This calculation cannot be carried out for the data set used in the 2008 edition of the GBAV, as the data was not comparable.
- 7 To produce averages, the low and very low categories were grouped together, as were the high and very high categories.
- To ensure comparability, a number of countries were excluded from the GBAV 2011 and 2014 female homicide data sets, partly because some sources were discontinued and thus not available for the 2014 database. Countries for which data was available for 2014 but not for 2011 were also excluded from this analysis.
- Given the small population of the Lesser Antilles, the eight sovereign states of the region were grouped together and their rates averaged to produce a regional estimate. While six of the states have very similar rates, they are higher in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (7.86, based on an average of 4 women killed) and in Trinidad and Tobago (6.94, based on an average of 46 women killed per year in 2007–12).
- These category names—high and very high—reflect the fact that they exceed the world average of 2.27 female homicides per 100,000 women.
- The time periods covered by the GBAV 2011 and 2014 databases overlap by two years, namely from 2007 to 2009, to allow for two five-year periods, which are averaged. For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.
- The Lesser Antilles region registered an overall decrease compared to average rates recorded in the GBAV 2011 database. This decline is not consistent across all countries within the region, however; while some female homicide rates decreased, as in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, others increased, as in Dominica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).
- The municipality of Ulan Ude has the highest rate of women killed in the Russian Federation, with an average rate of 11.7 in 2007–12, although a closer look at trends reveals an overall decrease, from a rate of 14.7 in 2007 and 18.0 in 2008, to 8.3 in 2012. The next highest female homicide rates were registered in Chita, Habarovsk, Kemerovo, and Yakutsk municipalities, where they exceeded 9.0 per 100,000 women.

- 14 While IUDPAS used to produce reports on homicide and femicide in cooperation with the National Police in Honduras, this data exchange ceased in July 2013 with the appointment of a new security minister (Radio Progreso, 2014). Since then, the two institutions have reportedly engaged in a 'media war', with the police reporting a marked decrease in homicide numbers in 2013 and IUDPAS challenging those figures (*Tiempo*, 2014).
- The maquila industry relies on factories that produce goods for export. In 2006 these factories, also called maquiladoras, accounted for 55 per cent of Mexico's manufacturing and 45 per cent of exports (Kopinak, 2011, p. 635).
- Operation 'Cast Lead' was an Israeli military campaign against Hamas in the Gaza strip that began on 27 December 2008 and lasted 23 days. It reportedly claimed the lives of approximately 1,440 Palestinians and 13 Israelis (CRS, 2009, p. 2).
- 17 UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960, and 2106 address issues related to women, peace, and security.
- 18 Following a protracted public debate on a law to ban army rifles from the home, 18 of the 26 cantons rejected the proposed draft in 2011 (Guardian, 2011).
- 19 See Part II of the UN Secretary-General's report on violence against women (UNGA, 2006) and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995).
- For example, the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda recognize sexual violence, including rape, as an act of torture, as a crime against humanity, and as an element of genocide in some circumstances (ICTR, 1998; ICTY, 2002). Note that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines 'crimes against humanity' to include: 'Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' (ICC, 2002, art. 7(1)(g)).
- 21 For example, the Holy See argued that the term 'gender-based violence' was unacceptable as it was ambiguous, further noting that it made 'some victims more equal than others' (Nielsen, 2012; Whall and Lee, 2012b).
- In fact, the Holy See, which had argued against the inclusion of a specific reference to 'gender-based violence' in the treaty, suggested that if the term 'women' could not be included instead of 'gender', then it would consider integrating the section into the section on IHL and human rights law (Whall and Lee, 2012a).
- 23 While most victims are women, these attacks can be directed at anyone, but particularly against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (UNHCR, 2011).
- 24 Raptus, also called *raptus melancholicus*, refers to a state of mind characterized by intense anxiety and despair (Milner, 2000, p. 127; Schlesinger, 2004).

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