



Information for Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

Femicide.net – is an independent project. In 2019 the project began to collect news about femicide and publish data in the public domain. The project starts its work because the society doesn't have full and truthful information about the femicide in Russia and authorities don't acknowledge the femicide as a problem.

Researchers of the project looked at publically accessible news sites in all 84 regions of Russia (excluding the annexed Crimea and Sevastopol) and noted reports about killing of women. The information was then checked against the websites of the prosecutor's offices, courts, and investigative committees. The resulting data was then entered into a table that reflected demography, social status, relations between the victim and the perpetrator, the circumstances of the crime, the course of the investigation and its conclusion.

This information is based upon the data collected by the Femicide.net project up to the 11th of April, 2021 and covers the femicide news of 2019-2021. We are providing new data for 2020 and 2021 and updating the data for 2019 that we presented to UN Human Rights Committee session 129 last year.

Official data on femicide still doesn't exist in Russia. The existence of femicide is denied by the authorities.

The situation with femicide in the Russian Federation still shows the failure of the State to comply with its obligations under Article 2 (non-discrimination), Article 3 (equality for women and men) and Article 6 (the right to life).

Femicide in the Russian Federation

As of the 11th of April, 2021, the femicide.net database contained:

1753 femicide news for 2019, including **1548** intimate femicide news (murders committed by relatives, intimate partners and acquaintances), **1493** femicide news for 2020 (**1306** intimate femicides) and **301** femicide news in 2021.

We could find out about the crime from the news, search, investigation, trial, sentence, attempt to falsify the case. When new data appeared it was added to the table. The coefficient of femicide - CNF, was calculated according to the standard formula: the number of murders was divided by the number of female population in the region and multiplied by 100 thousand. We calculated the coefficient for all

detected cases of femicide in general and separately for those in which the killer was related to the victim (coefficient of intimate femicide reported in the news, CNFi).

As of the 11th of April, 2021 the coefficient of femicide reported in the news (CNF) and the coefficient of the intimate femicide reported in the news (CNFi) for the Russian Federation: for the year 2019 CNF **2.26**, CNFi **2.00**, for the year 2020 CNF **1.93**, CNFi **1.69**.

The coefficients by regions in Russia in 2020 vary a lot – from **12.17** in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, **4.54** in the Republic of Khakassia to **0.13** in the Chechen Republic (the regions of the North Caucasus, where honor killings have been reported, also in these regions the lack of independent media is presented).

In the federal districts of Russia:

Federal district	2019 (the collection of the data continues)		2020 (the collection of the data continues)	
	CNF	CNFi	CNF	CNFi
Russia	2.26	2.00	1.93	1.69
Far Eastern	4.06	3.66	2.80	2.33
Volga	2.62	2.38	2.27	1.99
Northwestern	2.78	2.36	2.73	2.38
North Caucasian	1.02	0.79	0.71	0.61
Siberian	2.31	2.15	1.89	1.70
Ural	2.43	2.17	1.76	1.62
Central	1.85	1.58	1.65	1.42
Southern	1.83	1.59	1.78	1.54

Our CNF is calculated based on the news and does not reflect the real situation. CNFi is not only news about murders of women by “husbands”. The real rate of femicides is several times higher.

Data on the relationship between the killer and the victim. As of the 11th of April, 2021 and for 2020 there were mentions of **632** cases of femicide by an intimate partner, **62** – by a former intimate partner, **254** - by other male relatives (including **157** – son, **27** – grandson, **54** – close male relative) and **355** – by acquaintances. As for the category of “acquaintances”, as well as the category of “unknown” (**154**) and “unacquainted criminal” (**33**) – a close connection to the victim is not excluded. We are still clarifying the data on the structure of intimate femicide in Russia in 2019. As of the 11th of April, 2021 and for 2019 there were mentioned **720** cases of femicide committed by an intimate partner, **81** – by a former intimate partner, **312** by other male relatives (including **177** – son, **29** – grandson, **84** – close male relative) and **423** – by acquaintances, **1** – murder of a woman by police (a district police officer and his colleagues). Due to the emergence of new information, the category of “acquaintances”, as well as the category of “unknown” (**145**) and “unacquainted criminal” (**59**) have changed – a close connection to the victim is not excluded.

Femicide methods. Among the methods of murder in 2019 the ones that prevailed were: beaten – **625**, stabbed – **607**, strangled – **183**. The data for 2020 is, so far as follows: stabbed – **538**, beaten – **526**, strangled – **128**.

Places of femicide. Among the places of murder in 2019 prevailed: shared housing – **601**, victim’s housing – **365**, murderer's housing – **92**. Among the places of murder in 2020 prevailed: shared housing – **658**, victim's housing – **279**, street – **91**.

Difficult cases. In 2019 in **198** cases other people were injured, and in **52** cases femicide was committed by several killers. In 2020, these numbers are **172** and **24** respectively.

Femicide cover-up campaign. Almost all government statistics on violence published in Russia do not correspond to the reality – officials continue to conceal the real numbers of women killed by their intimate partners, they hide femicide as “external causes of death,” as we detailed in last year's report. The information campaign to conceal femicide is characterized by not labeling femicide and avoidance of the word “femicide”, replacing it with “domestic violence”, “murder of passion”, “intimate or domestic murder”, “alcoholic murder”. Since the end of 2020 we have begun to study the influence of the Russian media on the discourse about femicide. Taking the Ontario Femicide Media Analysis 2020 (Abhilash Kantamneni) methodology as an example, we have studied a small array of news – **282** messages about the femicides in Russia for the period of January-March 2021 (data as of 04/11/2021). News Selection Criteria: The first news of a murder comes from a Google Alert. We found the prevalence of frames that provokes femicide and almost complete absence of anti femicidal language. The accusation of the victim (direct or indirect) was present in **80** news, the voice of the authorities in **271**, the presentation of the problem as local in **274** cases, an undocumented history of previous violence in **234**, racism in **5** cases, myths about love, jealousy and honor in **31** news stories. A positive description of the victim's life was found in **2** news, a positive description of the victim's personality – in **2** news. The problem was described globally **0** times, the word "femicide" was encountered **0** times, the voices of loved ones were heard **0** times, information for victims of violence was displayed **1** time. We also started doing a similar analysis of our data for 2020 and discovered that all of the above trends continue.

How does this “first” news about femicide appear in Russia? The journalists use the reports of the press service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Investigative Committee. They take news from the state sites (written in a harsh, cold language) and rewrite them to make them more sensational. The language used by the IC is mostly femicidal, however, it is more ethical than the one that is used by the journalists.

Responsibility of journalists. We studied previous attempts of journalists to influence unethical descriptions of femicides, and also developed our own methodological materials for the Russian media (video lectures, articles with illustrations, presentations). We write letters to the editors of the newspapers and magazines that are known for their "sensationalism" and try to convince them to adhere to the ethical codes. We will continue to study the language used by the femicidal media and share our work with the press. A case that we discovered in 2020 shows another problem – femicidal fakes. The newspaper of the Agapovsky district “Zvezda” (chief editor - Elena Vladimirovna Vashkevich) published an article “Rating of the most sinister crimes of 2020 in the Chelyabinsk region”. Out of the 10 news stories 7 were fake. The newspaper continues its work and is just one of many thousands which are full of articles that violate the law.

Responsibility of the authorities. On February 25, 2021, we addressed the IC trying to convince the authorities about the importance of the ethical presentation of the first news. We presented them the results of the scientific data on the influence of media on femicide rates in different countries and our own calculations. After submitting this we received a response from the Inspector of the Department for Information Support of the Press Department, E.V. Kabysheva, that the coverage of the investigation of criminal cases is carried out according to the "requirements of the Russian legislation." The materials attached to the letter were ignored: "since research materials are not attached, it is not possible to objectively assess the situation... Please, kindly provide these materials as well as the factual information proving that the published messages can provoke femicide." We plan to continue our research on femicide news language as well as our dialogue with government officials.

The severity of the sentences. In 2020 we continued to study the sentences that the killers receive for committing femicide. Thousands of femicide cases remain in the "gray" zone and are written off by the police as deaths caused by external causes. Only thanks to publicity and demands of citizens these cases receive some type of real sentences. In the majority of cases known to us the killer ends up in prison for **49 to 144 months**, without receiving any rehabilitation. Sentences that do not reflect the social danger of femicide contribute to the idea that women are second-class citizens and make them defenceless against the law and society. In 2021 a sentence was passed in a murder case in the Yaroslavl Region (the body was found in a landfill in November 2020). The killer strangled the woman until breaking her cervical

vertebrae, he then threw her into a garbage container while she was still alive. The woman died in a garbage truck pressed by a hydraulic compacting shovel. The court sentenced him for "attempted murder" to 5 years in a general regime correctional colony.

The situation in prisons. In the Russian prisons criminals are not rehabilitated, on the contrary, they are subjected to humiliation and torture, that making the prisons a "factory" of femicide. The most studied data for 2019 and up to date show that in **161** cases the killers were convicted before at least 1 time, in **18** – at least 2 times, in **24** cases – at least 3 times, in **97** cases – repeatedly. In total for 2019 we can be certain about **111** cases of femicide that were a relapse committed by a killer previously convicted for gender violence and it is not always the first relapse. In **1453** cases, we simply do not know if there were any previous problems with the law (just as we do not know about the rest of the cases, which amount to at least 3000).

The health care situation. Psychiatric care and rehabilitation for patients with addictions in Russia is in a deplorable state. **831** femicide news (2019) report the killer's alcoholism, **38** - drug addiction. In **52** cases (2019), femicide was committed by a person with a mental illness, who did not receive any medical or social support. In **156** cases (2019), the killer had **2** or more diagnoses (in our study, we consider psychopathologies such as sadism (in **85** cases 2019) and jealousy (in **160** cases 2019) as diseases).

More data on femicide. The current situation with the femicide in Russia is reflected by the publicly open statistics of our project on the website Femicid.net. Our database is open and contains data on femicide by districts, regions, age, family and social status of victims and murderers, method and place of murder, presence of mental illnesses, investigation progress and sentences, etc. We are also preparing a photo memorial of femicide victims in Russia.

In 2021, another human rights group in Russia, the Consortium of Women's NGOs, published a different type of data. Using a computer program they analyzed 2,000 sentences dictated by the Russian courts in 2018 and concluded that there were at least **5,000** victims of "domestic violence" per year in Russia, which is 20 times more than the data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Conclusions. In the past year conservative values have become more rooted in Russia. Society has taken a step towards greater patriarchy and women's lack of rights. The Russian government continues to promote "traditional family values," perpetuating stereotypes about gender roles and increasing inequality between the sexes, which leads to discrimination. There is still no state programmes for fighting against gender violence in the Russian Federation. There is no legislation to ensure equality between women and men, no laws against femicide. There is no ministry that would defend women's rights and promote equal opportunities. Women are scarcely represented in executive positions, and in a rare case to occupy them, they perform functions that serve the patriarchy.

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