**Organisation submitting inputs**: Autonomous Women's Center (AWC)

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**Key questions and types of input sought to the Special Rapporteur – Femicide in Republic of Serbia**

1. *On the existence, or progress in the creation, of a national femicide watch and/or femicide observatory and/or observatory on violence against women with a femicide watch role; observatories at Ombudspersons’ office or Equality Bodies; academic institutions and/or NGOs, or any plans to create one.*

**2003 -** AWC for the first time collected data on the prevalence of femicide in the family-partner context (January - November 2003) in the Republic of Serbia during the 16 days of activism campaign entitled "Why they are not among us?". Available via [link](https://www.womenngo.org.rs/en/policy-activities/campaigns/16-days-of-activism-against-violence-against-women/547-campaign-2003-why-they-are-not-among-us).

**2010.** - **AWC established the first model and database for data collection and monitoring of femicide by a partner and family member in Serbia.** The AWC has been collecting and publishing data on femicide continuously since 2010. In the absence of publicly available, state statistics on the number of women killed by partners or family members, the AWC collects and analyses media releases and writes semi-annual and annual reports on the number and characteristics of this crime against women. Data are collected (following the example of women's organizations in Spain and Italy) by reviewing media reports because they are publicly available and easy to collect quickly. At that time, data could not be collected from official records of state institutions (for example, the police) because they were not disaggregated by the sex and relation of the perpetrator and the victim.

**2011** - The Women against Violence Network coordinated by AWC in cooperation with the European Women's Lobby Network, established the first [Independent observatory for monitoring violence against women](https://www.womenngo.org.rs/en/publications/good-practice-development-program/677-independent-observatory-for-monitoring-violence-against-women-2011). Although the mandate of this Observatory was broader than the monitoring of femicide, some articles in the Observatory's annual reports were about femicide.

**2017 –** May 18 was declared by the Government of Republic of Serbia as the *[Remembrance Day for Murdered Women Victims of Violence](https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/294055/ustanovljen-dan-secanja-na-zene-zrtve-nasilja.php)* ten days after representatives of the AWC and women's organisations WAV Network members submitted 8 000 signatures in support of the petition to declare this day, to the vice-president of Government of Serbia and president of Coordination Body for Gender Equality, Zorana Mihajlovic. In December of the same year, AWC and women's organizations WAV Network members sent a proposal for the establishment of a monitoring body for femicide monitoring to the Coordination body for gender equality of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. On May 18, 2018, vice-president of Government of Serbia and president of Coordination Body for Gender Equality, [Zorana Mihajlovic, stated that she would advocate the establishment of a such body](https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/mihajlovic-formirati-telo-za-pracenje-femicida/), but this has not been done to date.

1. *On other measures including research and studies undertaken to analyse femicide or gender related killings of women and girls, or homicides of women by intimate partners or family members and other femicides. If available, please share a copy of such studies.*

**2010-2020:** Since 2010, the Autonomous Women's Center has been writing and publishing semi-annual and annual reports on the prevalence and characteristics of femicide in a family-partner context. They are available on the website of the AWC via [link](https://www.womenngo.org.rs/publikacije/izvestaji-o-femicidu-u-srbiji) (Serbian only), as well as on the website of the WAV Network via [link](https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/en/femicide-in-serbia) (English).

Jovanovic, S. (2013). ‘Murder of women by partners: a study of judicial practice’, in the Annual Report of the Observatory for Monitoring Violence against Women 2012, Autonomous Women's Center Belgrade. Available via [link](https://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2013/Godisnji_izvestaj_Opservatorije_za_pracenje_nasilja_prema_zenama_2012.pdf) (Serbian).

Lukic, M. (2013). ‘Research on murders of women in the family during 2011 - actions of the police and centers for social work’ in the Annual Report of the Observatory for Monitoring Violence against Women 2012), Autonomous Women's Center Belgrade. Available via [link](https://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2013/Godisnji_izvestaj_Opservatorije_za_pracenje_nasilja_prema_zenama_2012.pdf) (Serbian).

Lacmanovic, V. (2015). Femicide – Who kills us?, Social policy - a journal for the theory and practice of social policy and social work, Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade, 3/2015: 61-78. Available via [link](https://www.ips.ac.rs/publications/femicid-ko-nas-ubija/) (Serbian).

Lukic, M. (2016). Report on femicide in Serbia for 2016 - Analysis of the actions of the police, prosecutor's office and centers for social work), Women Against Violence Network, Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade. Available via [link](https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/images/pdf/Izvestaj_o_femicidu_2016-Mreza_Zene_protiv_nasilja.pdf) (Serbian).

Lacmanovic, V. (ed) (2018) – Not One Women Less - Review of reports created within the project "Raise Voice for Silent – Toward more efficient identification of security risks for the prevention of femicide“, Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade. Available via link (Serbian).

Lacmanovic, V. (2019). ‘Femicide in Serbia: Search for data, Istitutional response and the Media image’ in Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies. Sociologia, 29, 2019, 1: 39-55. Available via [link](https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/images/pdf/ASHS_29-2019-1_LACMANOVIC.pdf) (Serbian).

Lacmanovic, V. (2020). ‘Making femicide visible’ in Perspectives Southeastern Europe #8: Women in Western Balkans: rights and fights. Issue 8, October 2020: 60-66. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Available via [link](https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2021/03/17/perspectives%2520-%252009-2020%2520-%2520web_0.pdf) (English).

1. *On the results of analysis of femicide cases, including the review of previous court cases and recommendations and actions undertaken in this respect.*

The data collected from media, shows that the number of women killed per year, the contexts in which women are killed and their relationships with the men who kill them have remained constant over the ten-year period.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Femicide | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Partner | 22 | 23 | 20 | 27 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Family member | 4 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 4 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| In total | 26 | 29 | 32 | 43 | 27 | 35 | 33 | 26 | 30 | 27 | 26 |

**2018.** – the AWC monitored two trials for femicide, and based on trial reports and verdicts, an analysis of the position of the injured parties was made. The results of the analysis indicate the need to change the practice in the direction of resolving property claims in criminal proceedings in order to avoid long and expensive procedures in civil proceedings and to spare the injured party from retrial, testimony, exposure to high costs of retrials and the like. In addition, the following recommendations are listed in the analysis:

- Consistently apply existing legislation in order to protect the rights of victims in criminal proceedings;

- Apply the existing legal provisions in order to protect the rights of the injured parties related to the realization of the property claim in criminal proceedings;

- Tighten penal policies;

- Provide continuous education in order to standardize the conduct of professionals employed in state bodies, especially in the judiciary, in order to adopt an approach focused on the injured;

- Provide continuous cooperation between non-governmental organizations and competent state bodies.

*4. On concrete measures taken to improve support to victims of violence and to prevent femicide, (risk assessment, efficiency of protection orders), in connection with the information gathered via femicide watches or observatories.*

**2012** – Security risk assessment lists became an integral part of Special Protocol on Conduct of Police Officers in Cases of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence against Women, at the [initiative of the AWC and women's organizations WAV Network members](https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/vesti/181-mup-odgovorio-pozitivno-na-zahtev-mreze-da-se-u-policijsku-praksu-uvedu-liste-za-procenu-i-upravljanje-rizicima).

**2016** – On the request of AWC and women NGO’s WAV network members or by its own initiative, Ombudsperson conducts enquiries, determine misconducts and issues recommendations to relevant institutions in cases of femicides. Misconducts identified by the Ombudsperson include institution employees failing to:

- forward information on reports of violence to other institutions responsible for providing protection to women and children;

- initiate criminal proceedings or request the issuance of protection measures when women reject to submit a report, even when they possess evidence of physical violence towards a woman or children;

- check in all cases of reported violence whether the perpetrator possesses a weapon;

- security risk assessment;

- treat children as victims of violence and take necessary protection measures to protect children who witness violence towards their mothers;

- make a plan of protection and support services for victims of violence;

- to investigate violence because they qualify it as family problems and marital conflicts.

**2017** - A new *Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence* was adopted, and has been applied since June 2017. Among the novelties brought by this law - which raise the protection of victims of domestic violence to a higher level (and whose introduction the AWC has advocated for many years) are: urgent measures of protection against domestic violence; mandatory risk assessment of recurrence of violence; mandatory coordination of competent authorities and consideration of all reported cases of violence; Coordination and Cooperation Groups led by the prosecutor at least once every 15 days to develop an individual plan for the protection and support of victims of violence; central record of all reported cases of domestic violence.

1. *On good practices and challenges in implementing an evidence-based response to the prevention of femicide.*

**Lack or absence of data** – certain data cannot be collected from the media or are not recorded in the institutional evidence (for example on the origin and legality of the firearm used in the violence; on the victim's vulnerability).

**Different data collection methodologies** – the type and number of data collected on femicide cases may differ from institution to institution (for example, there is no standardized form of the autopsy report and it may differ from one medical institution to another).

**Different scope** **of cases** - reporting on the number of femicides in 2019 in the 16 Days of Activism Against VAW campaign, the police included women killed by women in this number (while AWC consider as femicide just murders of women by male partner or family member).

**Disinterest of professionals** – professionals may be uninterested to work on femicide prevention, as the system responsible for providing protection to women and children is already overburdened with existing workloads, and creating new records and reporting about femicide is additional work for them.

**Data collection from institutions can take too long period of time** – AWC collects data from institutions on the basis of the Law on Access to Information of Public Importance. This procedure is time consuming especially due to:

1) a centralized approval system (for example, the police first send response for approval to the headquarters, and then to the AWC) – sometimes last few months or longer.

2) refusal of institutions to submit data with the explanation that it is a matter of protecting the privacy of the victim and the perpetrator - when the complaint procedure can last few months or years, and lead to the data not being collected at all.

**Unclassifiable cases** – there are cases for which it is not possible to determine whether it is a case of murder (femicide), suicide or natural death.

**The death occurred as a result of many years of suffering violence** – these cases may remain completely undetected. It is particularly worrying that the AWC has information that in one case the perpetrators were punished only for domestic violence, not for the murder of a woman who died a few days after being beaten by her sons.

**Contradictory data** – data collected from different sources may be contradictory (one institution states that there have been previous reports of domestic violence by the victim, while another institution claims opposite).

1. *On data, if available, on femicides or intimate-partner and family-related homicides of women and men in the past 3 years, including during the Covid-19 pandemic (indicating the time period e.g. since March 2020 to the end of December 2020) and its comparison with such data before the COVID-19 pandemic.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Intimate-partner femicide |
|  | January - March | March - December |
| 2018. | 5 | 15 |
| 2019. | 1 | 19[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| 2020. | 3[[2]](#footnote-2) | 17 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Family-related femicide |
|  | January - March | March - December |
| 2018. | 4 | 6 |
| 2019. | / | 7 |
| 2020. | 1 | 5 |

1. Including one case in which a woman committed suicide after her reports of violence were left without an adequate institutional response. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Including one case in which the media state that a woman was killed by a neighbor, who had previously raped her. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)