



## Highlights:

So far, in 2018, at least 57 females have been killed in Canada; that is one femicide victim every other day in this country.

Females of any age can be killed because they are female; victims range in age from two years to 94 years old.

Females are primarily killed by men with the greatest risk coming from current or former intimate partners; a significant proportion of these women are killed by men they were dating.

Indigenous girls and women continue to experience disproportionate rates of femicide in Canada. At least eight of the 57 victims were Indigenous women. Where information is known, this represents 19 percent of the victims; Indigenous women and girls account for only 4.9% of the population.

## Introduction

The *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability* (CFOJA) was launched on Dec. 6, 2017. Its overall mandate is to track femicides in this country and to monitor state and social responses to these killings. This is the first report of the CFOJA focusing on the period January 1 to April 30, 2018. Given the recent nature of some of the femicides described below, minimal information is currently available. Information will be updated on an ongoing basis as it is released or becomes available. Data is drawn from media reports at this stage.

The CFOJA defines femicide as the killing of females because they are female primarily, but not exclusively, by men (see [www.femicideincanada.ca](http://www.femicideincanada.ca)). International discussions are ongoing about the parameters that should be used to identify femicide. As such, in line with other countries and for tracking purposes, we count all female victims as femicides until more specific criteria are agreed upon and/or more detail becomes available about the circumstances of the killing (see <http://www.femicideincanada.ca/home/what>).

Since the beginning of 2018, at least 57 females have been killed in Canada. This is one femicide victim every other day in this country. We consider this a minimum estimate since it is likely that some femicides have not yet been reported or discovered, including those that may involve women and girls who have disappeared. In nine of the 57 cases (16%), a perpetrator has not yet been identified. Two of these nine cases are possible femicide-suicides, four are being investigated as suspicious deaths, and three are recognized as homicide but remain unsolved.

Below, all 57 cases are included when examining the characteristics of the femicide victims. When examining the victim-perpetrator relationship and perpetrator characteristics, only the 48 cases in which a perpetrator has been identified are included. The eight femicide victims killed in Toronto



on Monday, April 23, 2018 are included in these data. They, and two male victims, were mowed down by a man driving a van. It is believed that their deaths were motivated, at least in part, by misogynistic hate. As such, they provide a clear example of the need to label such killings as femicide – the misogynistic killing of women *because* they are women.<sup>1</sup>

**Geographic distribution:** Of the 57 women and girls killed, the largest group of women were killed in Ontario (33 or 58%), followed by Quebec and Manitoba, each with six women killed (11% each of the total). Nova Scotia and British Columbia each witnessed three women killed (or 5% each), followed by Alberta and New Brunswick with two women each, and one each in Saskatchewan and the Yukon. As noted, eight of Ontario's 33 victims were killed in the one incident in Toronto last week. This increases the number of femicides in Ontario; however, the largest group of women killed each year is consistently documented in Ontario which is Canada's most populous province where about 40 percent of the country's population resides.<sup>2</sup>

**Age of the victim:** The femicide victims ranged in age from two years old to 94 years old with an average age of 44 years. The age group representing the largest proportion of femicide victims were those aged 25 to 34 years (27%), followed by 55-64 years (20%) with 35-44 years and 65 and up equally represented at 14 percent.<sup>3</sup>

**Race/ethnicity of the victim:** Where information on the race/ethnicity of the victim was reported by media (43 of the 57 cases), 22 femicide victims were Caucasian/white (51%), 13 were visible minority (30%), and at least eight were Indigenous women or girls (19%).<sup>4</sup>

**Location:** During the four months, out of the 57 cases, 15 of the femicide victims (26%) were killed in a home that they shared with the perpetrator, 14 were killed in their own homes (25%), and one was killed (2%) in the perpetrator's home. Another 11 were killed outdoors (19%; e.g. park, street, or field)<sup>5</sup> and the remaining four were killed at a business, in another person's home, or in an institution. Finally, the location of the killing was not reported or is unknown in 12 cases (21%).

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on this incident, see <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/van-attack-victims-identified-1.4638102> and see also <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/april-2018/misogynistic-killings-need-public-label/>.

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that Ontario has the highest risk of femicide, however. For provincial/territorial rates of femicide and other information, please visit <http://www.femicideinCanada.ca/profiles/femicidemap>.

<sup>3</sup> Femicide of older women is increasingly recognized as a growing issue as the population ages. This group is clearly represented in the data with over one-third of victims aged 55 and older (<http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/issue-19-femicide-women-who-are-older>).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/LSC%20Discussion%20Paper%20to%20Special%20Rapporteur%20-%20Final.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> This figure is higher than normal because of the eight victims killed in the Toronto van attack. Removing this case, three victims were killed outdoors.



**Cause of death:** Cause of death is unknown/unreported in 33 of the 57 cases. In the remaining 24 cases, seven of the victims were reportedly shot (30%), three were beaten or bludgeoned (13%), and four were stabbed (17%). The largest group of femicide victims were killed with a vehicle (10 or 42%), including the eight victims of the Toronto case.

**Victim-perpetrator relationship:** Of the 48 cases in which a perpetrator was identified, 18 of the cases involved women who were killed by current or former male intimate partners (38%). The proportion of intimate partner femicides increases to 43 percent when the eight female victims killed in the Toronto incident are excluded. This underscores the danger women continue to face in their intimate relationships with men. At least four of the 18 cases involved women killed by former male partners; however, this may be an underestimation of the role played by separation/estrangement because pending separation may have been a factor, but it is not yet known.

Seven of the 18 women were killed by boyfriends/ex-boyfriends (38%), underlying the importance of the reforms in the Federal government's Bill C-75 which seek to modernize the language in the *Canadian Criminal Code* to use the term 'intimate partner' to capture dating relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Another 10 of the 48 cases involved femicide victims killed by strangers (21%). This drops to six percent when the victims in the Toronto incident are removed. Four femicide victims were children/stepchildren of the perpetrator (8%), four were other family members (8%), three were acquaintances (6%). Finally, of the 48 cases, the victim-perpetrator relationship has not yet been specified or reported in nine cases (19%).

**Gender of the perpetrator:** Focusing on those 48 victims for which their perpetrator has been identified, femicide victims were killed by male perpetrators in 89 percent and females were perpetrators in 11 percent of cases. In one case, the perpetrator's gender has not been reported.

**Age of the perpetrator:** Perpetrators ranged in age from 18 to 81 years old with an average age of 35 years old.<sup>7</sup> The largest proportion of perpetrators were aged 25-34 (38%), followed by those aged 18-24 (23%), aged 35-44 (17%), and 55-64 (13%). Those aged 45-54 (4%) and aged 65 and older (4%) represented the smallest group of perpetrators.<sup>8</sup>

**Race/ethnicity of the perpetrator:** Where information was reported by the media (20 of the 48 cases), seven of the perpetrators were Caucasian/white (35%), eight were visible minority (40%), and five of the perpetrators were Indigenous (25%). However, information remains

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-new-legislation-aims-to-increase-protections-for-domestic-abuse/>.

<sup>7</sup> Refers to primary perpetrator only.

<sup>8</sup> The age of one perpetrator was not reported.



missing/unreported in almost 60 percent of the cases so it is unknown how the distribution of race/ethnicity may change when further information becomes available.

**Case status:** Of the 48 cases in which a perpetrator was identified, charges have been laid in the majority of cases (38 cases; 80%). In the remaining 10 cases, charges are reportedly pending in one case and an outstanding warrant for arrest has been issued in another case. In two cases, the perpetrators are now dead: one was found dead and the other was shot by police. In six cases, the perpetrator committed suicide following the femicide.

**Media contact:**

Myrna Dawson  
Director, Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence  
University of Guelph  
[mdawson@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mdawson@uoguelph.ca)

**For other media contacts, see CFOJA Advisory Panel:**

<http://www.femicideincanada.ca/home/who>