



Understanding Sex/Gender-Related Motives and Indicators (SGRMIs) in Femicide

From 2018 to 2024, there were at least 1,014 killings of women & girls in Canada involving male accused – at least 73% of these killings involved reported sex/gender-related motives and indicators (SGRMIs) of femicide.

What does this mean?

Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls (also referred to as Femicide/Feminicide)¹

Number	Sex/gender-related motives and indicators (SGRMIs)
1	Women and girls killed by intimate partners
2	Women and girls killed by family members
3	Previous record of harassment/violence
4	Illegal deprivation of her liberty
5	Use of force and/or mutilation
6	Body disposed of in a public space
7	Sexual violence was committed before and/or after the femicide
8	Victim was working in the sex industry
9	Hate crime motivated by bias against women or girls
10	Victim of forms of illegal exploitation

¹ United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime/United Nations Equity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. 2022. Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as femicide/feminicide). Vienna: UNODC & UN Women.

Below, each SGRMI is defined and a real example of femicide provided. Because only public information is accessed in our research, actual numbers are significantly underreported for all SGRMIs.

#01 Women and girls killed by intimate partners - At least 382 women and girls

This femicidal context is most often referred to as 'intimate partner femicide' and includes perpetrators who were current or former intimate partners of their victims.

Narrative: A woman was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend after he broke into her apartment. She died from a wound to her neck, which was described as a near decapitation. Just three months before her killing, the perpetrator was released from prison after serving time for assault, break and enter, and threatening death. He had broken into her home, threatening her and her mother that he would shoot them in the head. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in connection with her killing.

#02 Women and girls killed by family members – At least 194 women and girls

This femicide context is most often referred to as 'familial femicide' and includes relationships between victims and perpetrators that were family members such as blood relatives, other household members, or relatives by marriage or adoption.

Narrative: A woman and her two young children were killed by her common-law partner. He first viciously bludgeoned their daughter and son as they were sleeping and then killed the woman before setting their house on fire. The perpetrator had four prior convictions of intimate partner violence.

#03 Previous record of harassment/violence – At least 152 women and girls

Previous history of harassment/violence captures those victims for whom there was a record of physical, sexual, or psychological violence and/or harassment perpetrated by their killer.

Narrative: A woman was doused with gasoline and set on fire by her estranged husband. She died the following day from complications associated with burns to most of her body. Her killing came after years of abuse at the hands of the perpetrator, including multiple violent incidents, threats, and arrests. The perpetrator had previously pleaded guilty to three counts of uttering death threats and two counts of failing to comply with a condition to not go near her. He was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

#04 Illegal deprivation of her liberty – At least 31 women and girls

This femicidal context is “applicable when there is evidence that the victim was unlawfully detained, against her will, or unlawfully taken away, concealed, or detained from their legal guardian, prior to the killing. This means that the victim was kidnapped, illegally restrained, hijacked or unlawfully deprived of her liberty through any means” (UNODC, 2022: 13).

Narrative: A woman was allegedly killed by her ex-boyfriend, who was on parole for prior domestic violence charges against her. He allegedly held the victim hostage, beat her, and destroyed her cell phone in the most recent incident. He was prohibited from approaching the victim or her home at the time of her death. He now faces first-degree murder.

#05 Use of force and/or mutilation – At least 131 women and girls

Referred to as ‘killing accompanied by mutilation of the body’ in the UN framework, this applies to situations that “present body mutilation or, in general, when there are signs of derogative violence on the body that go beyond the amount needed to put an end to the life of the victim” (UNODC, 2022:13).

Narrative: A woman was subjected to excessive violence when her former intimate partner who brutally attacked her inside her home. The man used at least three knives in the killing, causing 71 cut and stab injuries to the victim's body and face. Five of the stab wounds penetrated the victim's chest cavity, with one knife blade breaking off and embedding in her heart. The victim and perpetrator were previously married but had been separated for several years. The perpetrator pled guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 14 years.

#06 Body disposed of in a public space – At least 152 women and girls

This variable captures instances where “the body of a female victim was transported from the crime scene and intentionally exposed in an open area” (UNODC, 2022:14).

Narrative: A woman's body was found disposed of in a public space after her current male partner choked her to death. He dressed the victim's body in clothes she was wearing on a walk the night before and dragged her into the back of her car. He drove the victim's body to a treed area along the side of the road two kilometres from their home and abandoned her there. She was later found by a passerby. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

#07 Sexual violence committed before and/or after femicide – At least 29 women and girls

This variable applies in situations when “the victim was subjected to sexual violence, before, during or after the killing. In addition to physical evidence of sexual assault on the victim's body, this may include the presence of biological material foreign to the victim” (UNODC, 2022: 14).

Narrative: A woman was beaten to death by a stranger while working at a community reading room. There was evidence that the offender sexually assaulted the victim during the brutal attack, which included evidence of injuries to the victim's genitals, forceful penetration, and the perpetrator's semen and DNA on the victim's body. The man was found guilty of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 25 years.

#08 Victim was working in the sex industry – At least 10 women

This refers to situations when “a woman who worked in the sex industry is a victim of intentional homicide” (UNODC, 2022: 14-15).

Narrative: A woman who had previously been involved in the sex industry was reported missing and later found dead in a rural area. She had previously worked as an escort and an exotic dancer. Nearly two years after she was last seen, her dismembered remains were found in a suitcase and the death was determined to be a homicide. The perpetrator alleges the victim “hit her own head against a heavy mirror and started bleeding”. He pleaded guilty to committing an indignity to human remains and counselling an indictable offence, and was sentenced to eight years in prison.

#09 Hate crime motivated by bias against women or girl – At least 43 women and girls

These femicides were committed by perpetrators who were “motivated by hatred, which means that the perpetrator intentionally targets a woman because of a bias against this perceived group of people, or misogyny” (UNDOC, 2022: 13).

Narrative: The perpetrator targeted four vulnerable Indigenous women at homeless shelters, where he would lure them to his apartment and sexually assault them before killing them. The bodies were found dismembered and were disposed of in garbage bins, dumpsters, landfills. There was evidence of significant abuse perpetrated against former intimate partners. He was known to possess antisemitic, misogynistic, and white supremacist views.

#10 Victim of forms of illegal exploitation – At least 2 women and girls

The variable applies in situations when there is “evidence that the victim was subjected to trafficking in persons or to other forms of exploitation prior to the killing, such as slavery, forced labour, or sexual exploitation” (UNODC, 2022:13).

Narrative: The perpetrator fatally pushed his girlfriend off a cliff, and her body was later discovered in a wooded ravine. Family members provided evidence suggesting that she died while being forced into prostitution against her will.

