

# Femicidal Violence in Figures

## Latin America and the Caribbean

Preventing femicides: an obligation for States  
and a persistent challenge in the region



**Gender Equality  
Observatory**  
for Latin America and the Caribbean



### A. The obligation of States to prevent femicidal violence continues to be a challenge in the region

The UNITE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign of the Secretary General of the United Nations, which has been under way since 2008, aims to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence against women and girls worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) estimates that 31% of women aged 15–49 have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner and sexual violence inflicted by others. This multi-stakeholder campaign is part of the United Nations system's efforts to support Latin American and Caribbean States in fulfilling their due diligence obligation to prevent, investigate, and punish gender-based violence against women (CEDAW, 2010), as well as to ensure "restitution, reparations, or other just and effective remedies" (OAS, 1994).

The States of the region have been working for more than four decades on the design of public policies and the construction of a specific institutional framework to respond to the seriousness of gender-based violence against women and girls in all its dimensions, including passing laws and taking action against its most extreme manifestation: femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women and girls.<sup>1</sup> In the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean agreed on "transforming data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions" as one of its implementation pillars (CEPAL, 2017). Within this framework, significant progress has been made in breaking the statistical silence that prevailed at the end of the twentieth century. Most countries in the region have carried out prevalence surveys or implemented specific modules in sectoral surveys, and several of them have developed and strengthened initiatives for single registries and for feminicide or femicide registries (ECLAC, 2022).

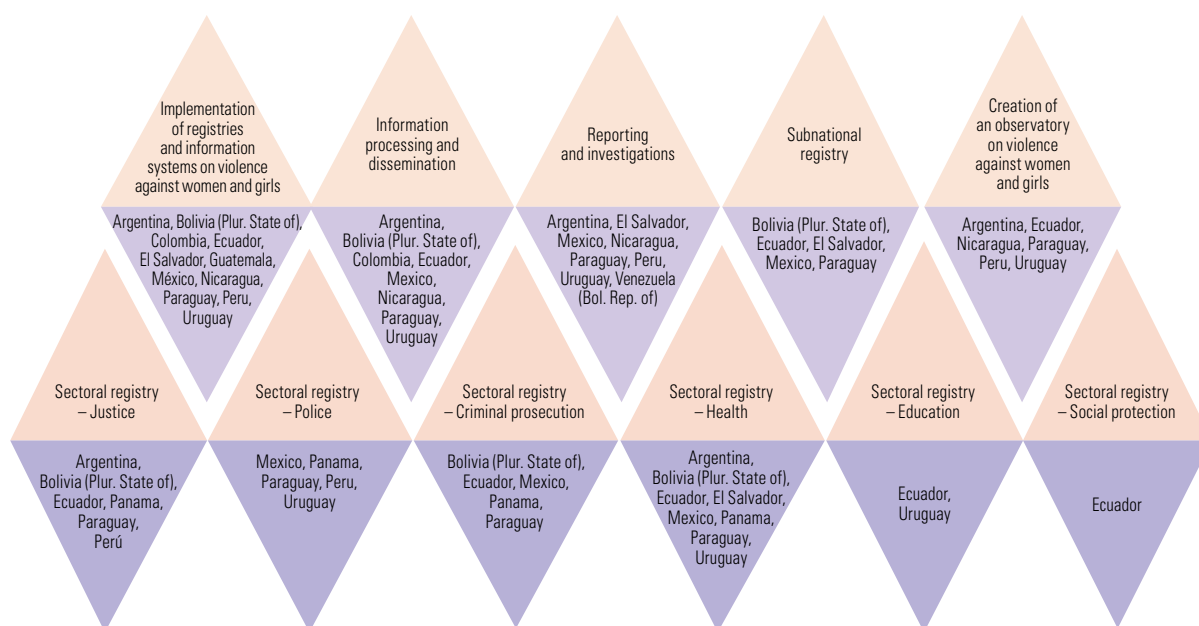
At the forty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in 2008, the Latin American and Caribbean countries agreed to produce indicators and statistics to monitor femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women. With the creation of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) contributes to the analysis of femicidal violence by compiling and disseminating official statistics on femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings that occur annually.

<sup>1</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, gender-related killings of women or girls are referred to using the terms "femicide", "feminicide" or "gender-based aggravated homicide".

In Latin America, 18 countries have passed laws criminalizing femicide, feminicide or gender-based killing of women.<sup>2</sup> Of those, 13 have comprehensive laws to address violence against women, and all of those laws contain specific provisions on the production of information, records, statistics, observatories, information systems or reports on gender-based violence against women and girls (see diagram 1).<sup>3</sup> The five countries that do not have comprehensive laws on violence have amended their criminal law to recognise this offence, but have not established the obligation to keep records or produce disaggregated information or data in that regard.<sup>4</sup> In the Caribbean, no countries have passed comprehensive laws on gender violence or laws addressing femicide, although they do have specific laws in place against domestic violence and sexual abuse.

### Diagram 1

Latin America (13 countries):<sup>3</sup> countries that have a legal mandate with specific provisions on recording data and information on violence against women and girls, by type of registry and country



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Regulations" [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/laws>.

<sup>3</sup> Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In addition, the comprehensive laws of Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, México, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay establish the legal obligation to create information systems and registries on acts of violence with specific variables that allow, at a minimum, clear identification of the victim, the assailant and the circumstances surrounding the reported facts. In the cases of Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Panama and Paraguay, such registries also contain information about judicial proceedings and penalties. In México incidence and recidivism rates of perpetrators should also be reported, as well as reparations for victims. In El Salvador and Paraguay, resources spent on the care of women victims of violence are also available as a variable in records. Lastly, the regulations of Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay require the creation of observatories to produce periodic information on violence against women or femicides and make that data available to the public.

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

<sup>3</sup> Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

<sup>4</sup> Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba and Honduras.

## B. In most Latin American countries femicide rates have varied little in recent years

In 2022, at least 4,050 women were victims of femicide or feminicide in 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the latest data reported by official agencies to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. This shows what a persistent and serious problem femicide is in the region.

It is very important to note that current information on victims of feminicide or femicide does not enable the construction of a comparable time series in the region's countries. During the current period of annual updating of the indicator by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean several countries have improved their femicide or feminicide registries through legal reforms, which has entailed methodological adjustments that prevent a strict comparison. Thus, the corrections resulting from clarification in the cases of Argentina and Peru, as well as the change in the source of information for Brazil, have substantially modified the series for the years 2014–2022. Furthermore, the legal or regulatory definition of feminicide and its interpretation by the police or the courts has an impact on the number of cases registered from year to year, since there are training and awareness-raising processes, as well as protocols, which slowly make the records more complex and harmonize them. This results in better measurement of the problem but not necessarily the possibility of determining rises or falls based on annually reported data.

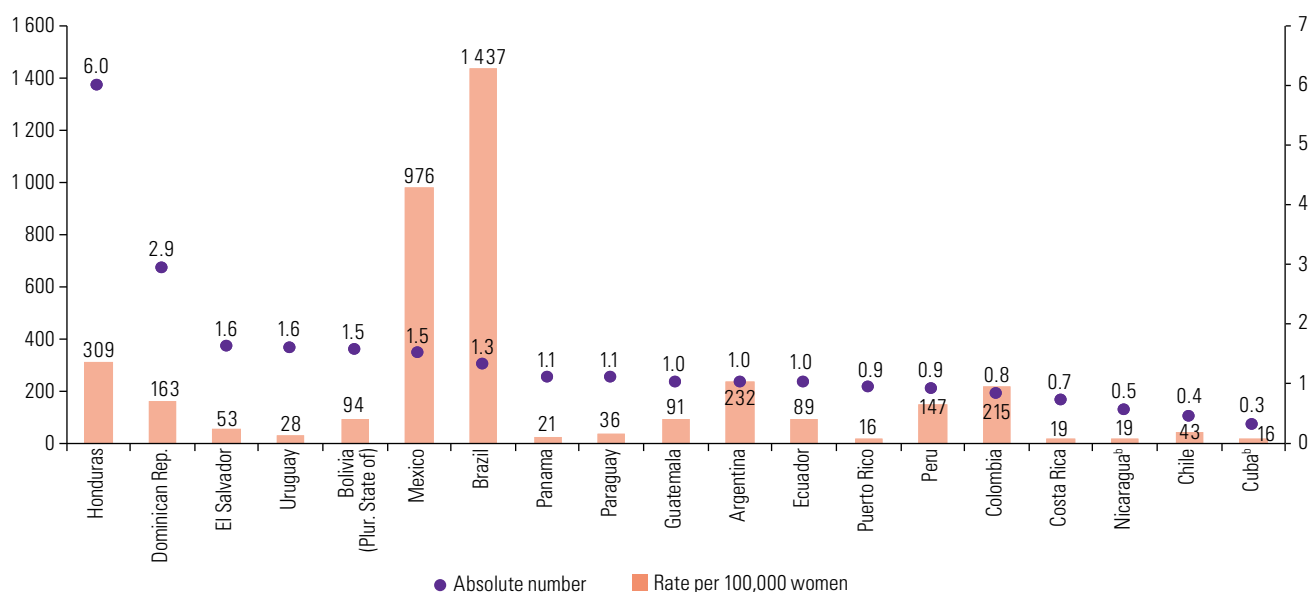
## C. Femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women in Latin America

Of the 19 Latin American countries and territories that reported the number of femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women in 2022, the highest recorded rates were in Honduras (6.0), the Dominican Republic (2.9), El Salvador and Uruguay (1.6 in both countries). The lowest rates (which is to say less than 1 victim of femicide or feminicide per 100,000 women) were in Puerto Rico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Chile, and Cuba (see figure 1). The last of these had the lowest rate (0.3 cases of gender-related homicides per 100,000 women); it was also its first year reporting this information since the adoption in September 2022 of a new criminal code that criminalizes the offence of aggravated gender-related homicide.

**Figure 1**

Latin America (19 countries and territories): femicides, 2022

(Absolute numbers and rates per 100,000 women)<sup>a</sup>



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records from the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

<sup>a</sup> The rate reflects the total number of cases of femicide or feminicide that occurred during the period observed per 100,000 women in each country, in accordance with national legislation.

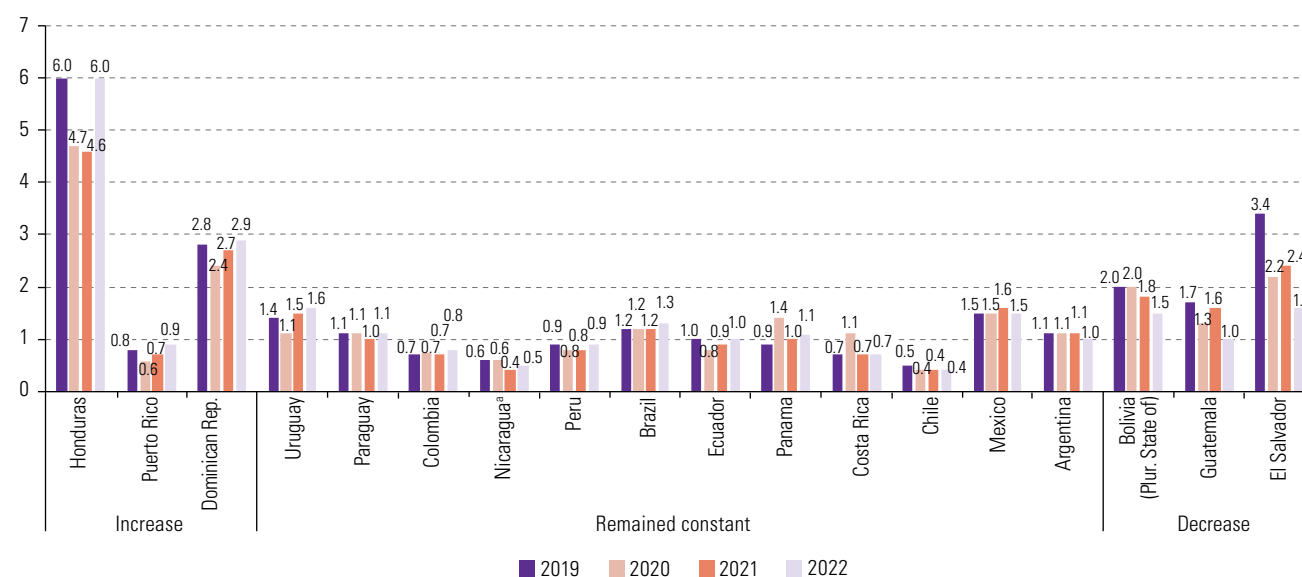
<sup>b</sup> Cuba and Nicaragua only report cases for the indicator women's deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner.

An examination of the femicide rates reported by 18 countries and territories in Latin America for the period 2019–2022 reveals that in 12 countries (Uruguay, Paraguay, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico and Argentina) the figures for this indicator have remained constant, with only slight variations in the last four years.<sup>5</sup> Another group of countries and territories (Honduras, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic) have recorded an increase in the indicator over the last four years. Of those, Honduras has seen the largest increase in the rate, which rose 30% in 2022 compared to the previous year. However, in the Dominican Republic and Honduras there was a significant drop in cases between 2019 and 2020, making the increase in the two years that followed notable. Only three countries (Plurinational State of Bolivia, Guatemala and El Salvador) registered a decline in femicide rates (see figure 2).

**Figure 2**

Latin America (18 countries and territories): feminicides or femicides, 2019–2022

(Rates per 100,000 women)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records from the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

<sup>a</sup> Nicaragua only reports cases for the indicator women's deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner.

It is not possible to identify an upward or downward trend in the rates of femicide or feminicide in each country, since the variations are small and do not reflect an increase or decrease in the problem. This is true, for example, of Guatemala and El Salvador, where the rate first reflected a decrease in cases between 2019 and 2020, then an increase in the period 2020–2021, before falling again in the 2021–2022 biennium.

The available information shows the persistence of femicide, despite greater public awareness, progress in the measurement of cases and the state response.

The characteristics of femicides or feminicides reported by Latin American countries for 2022 are: relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, age and nationality of the victim, and number of surviving children.

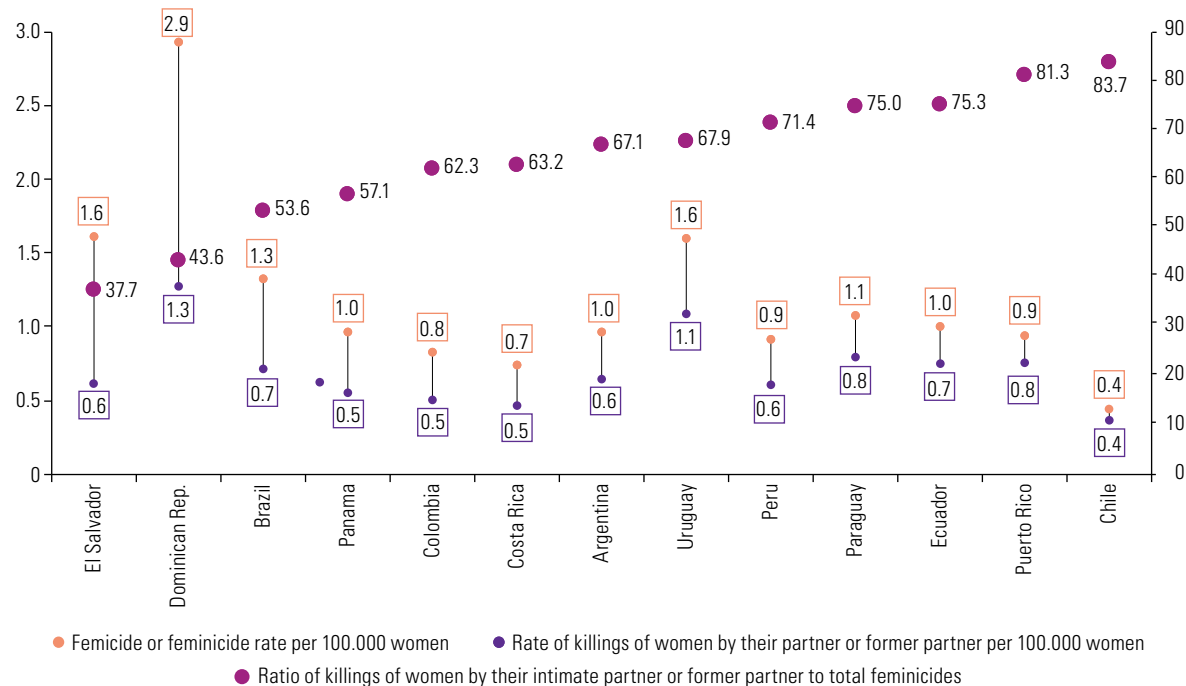
In this context, 13 Latin American countries and territories distinguish the links between the victim and the perpetrator in reported cases of femicide or femicide and report significant differences among them. Chile, Puerto Rico and Ecuador registered 75% or more killings of women by intimate partners or former partners. In Uruguay, Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama and Brazil, the same link between victim and perpetrator was found in 50% to 75% of cases. In El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, cases in which the victim had or had had an intimate-partner relationship with their assailant accounted for less than half of femicides (see figure 3).

<sup>5</sup> As noted, Cuba has been reporting since 2022.

Figure 3

Latin America (13 countries and territories): femicide, femicide or killing of women by an intimate partner or former partner, 2022

(Rates per 100,000 women and percentages)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records from the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Eight Latin American countries provided information on the age of femicide or femicide victims. More than 70% of victims were aged 15–44 years. However, it is noteworthy that 4% of the total number of victims were girls under 15. In two of those countries (Panama and Uruguay), the relative weight of killings of girls accounted for 10% or more of the total number of cases. It is important to consider that, according to the available information, 8% of victims are aged 60 or over; that percentage is exceeded in El Salvador, where the proportion is 21%, and in Chile, where it makes up 14% of the total (see table 1). In a context of an aging population in the region, attention needs to be given to gender-based violence against older women, a serious and often normalized and disregarded situation.

In the cases of Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Peru, the disaggregation of the indicator for femicide, femicide or gender-related killings of women and girls is not comparable because the age brackets used by those countries differ from those used and requested by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. In Argentina, 14 victims were girls or adolescents (0–17 years old), 5 of whom were under 12 years old; in Colombia, 9 of the total number of femicides reported were of children under 13. In Ecuador, 4 victims were girls under 15 years old and in Peru, 14 victims up to age 18 were reported. In sum, in those four countries, 41 girls and adolescents between the ages of 0 and 18 were victims of femicide, femicide or gender-related killings of women and girls. Finally, in the Dominican Republic, 2 victims were aged 0–17. If this is added to the total number of girls aged 0–14 reported by the 8 countries represented in table 1, then a total of 56 girls and adolescents were victims of this crime.

**Table 1**

Latin America (8 countries): feminicides or femicides, by age group, 2022  
(Absolute numbers)

Country	0–14 years	15–29 years	30–44 years	45–59 years	60 years and over	Total
El Salvador	0	14	16	12	11	53
Panama	2	9	8	1	1	21
Nicaragua	0	6	12	1	0	19
Costa Rica	0	7	7	4	1	19
Paraguay	1	15	15	4	1	36
Guatemala	6	37	31	14	3	91
Chile	0	10	20	7	6	43
Uruguay	4	9	11	2	2	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>310</b>

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records from the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

In the last decade, migration and human mobility have become increasingly important on the public agenda. The information provided for 2022 for 9 Latin American countries shows that 81% of victims whose nationality was reported lived in their country of origin, while 19% had other nationalities. However, the contexts of migration vary greatly, and this distribution is very different from one country to another, precluding any comparisons. In El Salvador, 68% of femicides were of non-Salvadoran women (36 of 53 femicide victims were migrants), in the Dominican Republic, 16% of femicide victims were non-Dominican, and in Chile and Costa Rica, victims of other nationalities accounted for close to 10% of the total (4 and 2 cases, respectively). In only three of the countries with information were the victims all nationals.

## D. Numbers and rates of femicide, feminicide or gender-related killings of women in the Caribbean

In the case of the Caribbean, none of the countries have comprehensive laws on gender-based violence or laws to tackle femicide or feminicide; for that reason, they provide information on gender-related killings (intentional homicides).

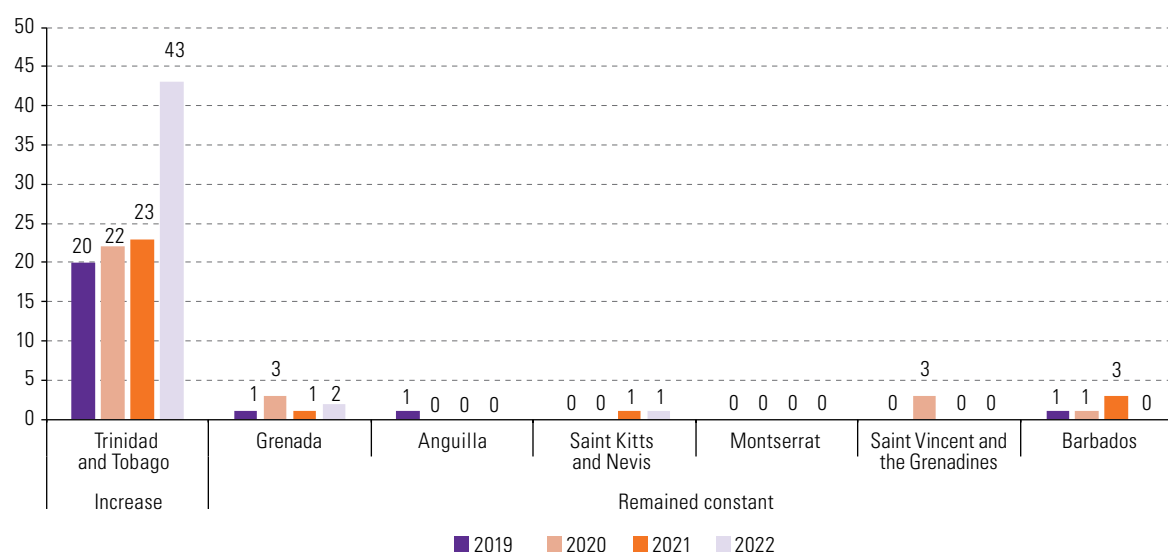
For 2022, 7 countries and territories reported that a total of 46 women were victims of lethal gender-based violence in the subregion. The highest number of cases was reported by Trinidad and Tobago, while Barbados, Montserrat and St. Vincent and the Grenadines reported no gender-related killings of women for that year (see figure 4). In this case the data are presented as absolute numbers, not rates, because some countries have very few cases and the population of women falls short of 100,000, making the calculation difficult. For example, in 2022 the population of women was estimated at 8,000 in Anguilla, 63,000 in Grenada and 25,000 in Saint Kitts and Nevis (CEPALSTAT data).

A comparison of the data of the 7 countries analysed for the femicide indicator over the last 4 years shows that more cases were only reported in Trinidad and Tobago, where in the first 3 years the increase was only marginal, but between 2021 and 2022 recorded gender-related killings of women jumped by almost 50%. In the remaining countries (Grenada, Anguilla, St. Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados) the figures were constant. In the case of Montserrat, it is noteworthy that no cases have been reported in the last four years.

With respect to the variables for which the data can be disaggregated, in Anguilla and Grenada the victims in all cases were nationals; there was no information available on other variables.

**Figure 4**

The Caribbean (7 countries and territories): gender-related killings of women, 2019–2022  
(Absolute numbers)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records from the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

## E. Production and management of data on femicide, femicide or killings of women in Latin America

The measurement of this violation of the human rights of women and girls, which represents the most serious and extreme manifestation of gender-based violence against women, still shows challenges as regards the production of data that account for its complexity and its relationship with other forms and areas of gender-based violence against women and girls. It is not possible, from the information, to analyse the shortcomings affecting each country's institutional framework for carrying out intersectoral coordination that would make it possible to move beyond general or aggregate data to the development of information that would shed light on the complexity of the problem and contribute to the institutional response.

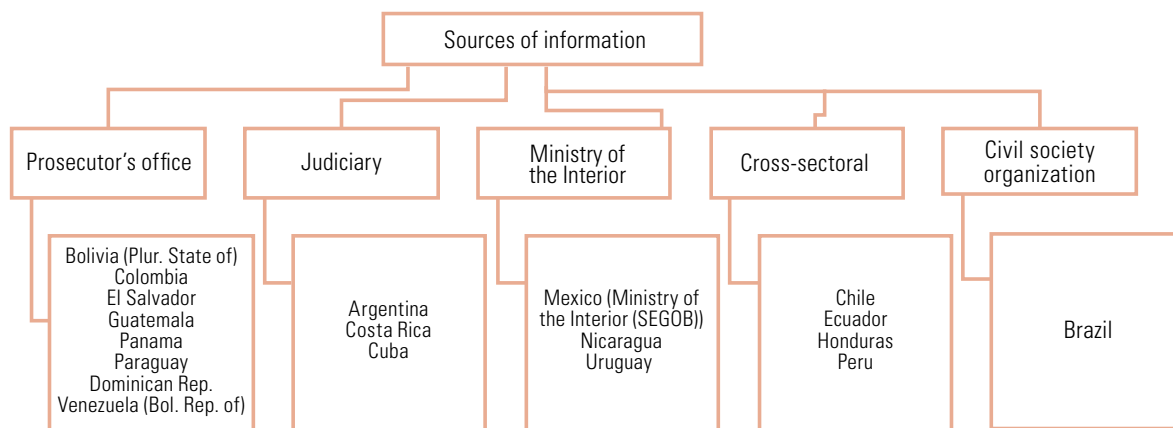
Depending on the structure of each State, records on femicides or feminicides in the region's countries are kept by government agencies in the judiciary, the Interior Ministry and the security sector, such as the police and prosecutors' offices, a system promoted, supported, or coordinated by mechanisms responsible for gender equality at the national and sectoral levels (see diagram 2). In two countries (Ecuador and Peru), statistical agencies have started to play a methodological validation role for the femicide indicator, taking into account that it is a regional metric that complements the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this framework, intersectoral coordination arrangements for producing annual data on femicide or feminicide are a mechanism for defining analytical criteria for updating and refining annual information on femicides, femicides and gender-related killings of women, in addition to coordinating measures to strengthen common actions and enhance their impact.

The management of femicide or feminicide data involves agencies that produce the information or are its main sources, such as police and prosecutors' offices (based on investigation files), or other entities involved in the prosecution of the offence, in addition to those that, as primary users of the information, are responsible for reporting the country's official data. All the institutions involved in the national production of those data are, for the most part, interagency coordination bodies, which agree on how and when the information is published and send it annually to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (see diagram 3).

**Diagram 2**

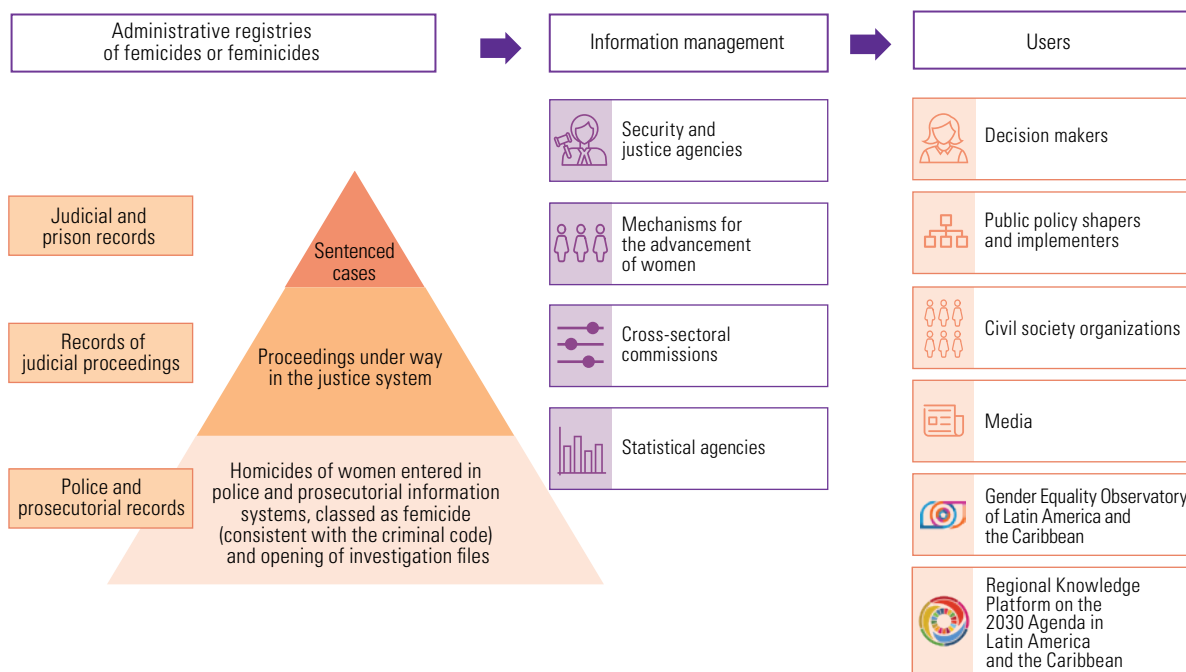
Latin America (19 countries): official sources of information on femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, most recent data available.

**Diagram 3**

Latin America and the Caribbean: national processes for the production of annual data on femicide, feminicide or gender-related killings of women



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Depending on the legal classification in each country, the country data for this indicator record the victims of femicide, femicide or gender-related killings of women, as well as characteristics of victims, perpetrators, and the crime itself. However, this background information produced by public security and judicial agencies and validated by intersectoral bodies is data that emerges at different points in the police or judicial investigation process. This situation poses significant challenges as regards the comparability of the regional indicator on the rate of feminicides or femicides per 100,000 women, which was included as complementary and as one



of the region's priority indicators within the framework of monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (indicator C5-2), and in order to have quality information for comparing the characteristics of this extreme form of gender-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

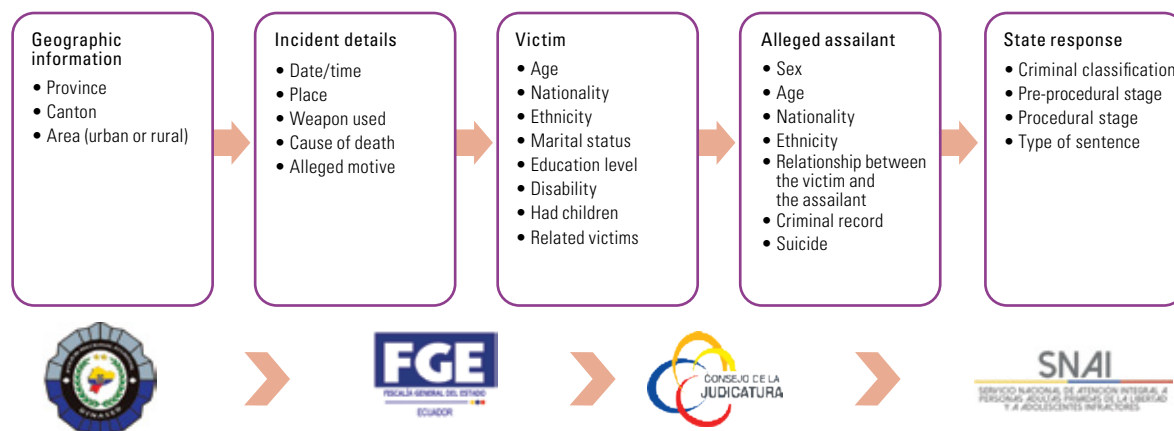
Another characteristic of the administrative registries that collect information on this crime is their non-standardized legal definition in the region, an issue that, in the case of countries that only recognize femicide as a crime restricted to the intimate-partner or conjugal sphere, leads to underreporting of cases that occur in other settings in women's lives. However, most Latin American countries record all femicides regardless of the context in which they occur. An example is the national femicide registry developed by the Women's Office of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina "of statistical data on judicial proceedings to investigate gender-related killings of cisgender and transgender/transvestite women ...in all jurisdictions of the country... that provide information on the judicial proceedings, the victims and the perpetrators" (Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, 2023). In the case of Peru, it also includes the "consideration of all victims of femicide in which the inquiry has reached at least the preliminary prosecutorial investigation stage of the criminal prosecution process" (INEI, 2023), while the registry kept by the Ministry of the Interior of Uruguay publishes the total number of femicides or gender-related homicides of women solved (Ministry of Social Development, 2023). These examples show that the data developed at the regional level are primarily drawn from investigations and judicial proceedings.

## F. Notable practices in the production of official femicide data

One notable practice in the production and dissemination at the regional level of information on femicides can be seen in Ecuador. The country has an intersectoral coordination mechanism called the Statistical Strengthening Group for Security and Justice Indicators of the Special Commission for Statistics on Security, Justice, Crime and Transparency, composed of 36 public entities under leadership of the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC). The Commission periodically reports the number of femicides that have occurred in the country, based on information on killings of women in the administrative records of the National Directorate of Crimes against Life, Violent Deaths, Disappearances, Extortion and Kidnappings (DINASED) of the Ministry of the Interior and the Integrated System of Prosecutorial Actions (SIAF) of the Attorney General's Office. Once the information has been validated, the cases entered in the Judicial Processing Information System (SATJE) are reviewed. As diagram 4 shows, data integration is followed by the validation, consolidation and integration of the information. As a result of data feedback between the SIAF and SATJE, the information is revised and updated every six months.

**Diagram 4**

Ecuador: systematization of the femicide registry process, 2023

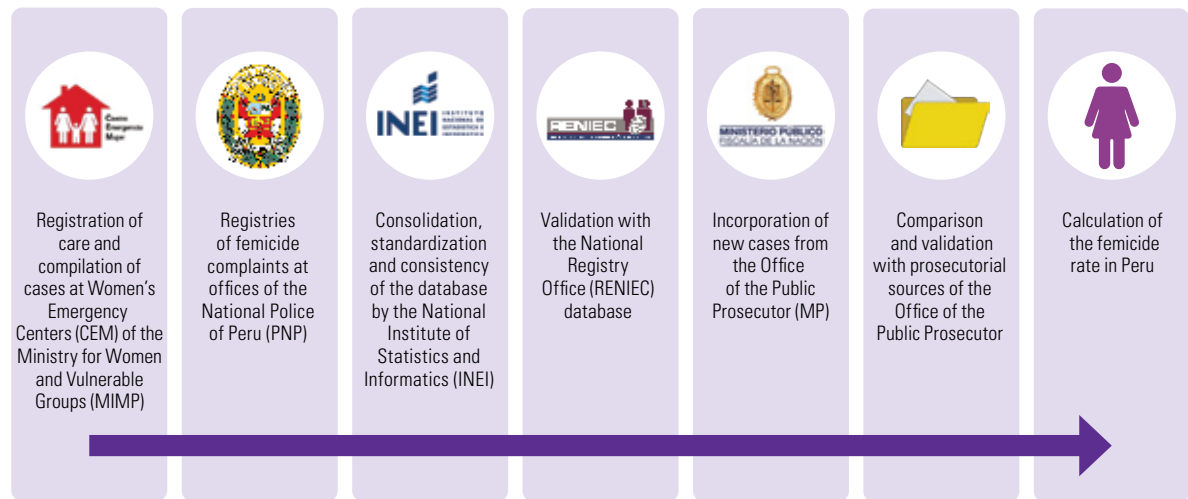


**Source:** National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC), presentation at the webinar on measurement of gender-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)/Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Victims of Crime, Public Security and Justice, June 2023.

Since 2009, the Crime Observatory of the Public Prosecutor's Office of Peru, for its part, has accompanied the generation of regional indicators of femicide or femicide in other countries of the region, sharing its experience both at international events and in the form of direct support through South-South technical assistance in collaboration with ECLAC (in El Salvador and Ecuador, among others). Since 2020, official figures for femicides are jointly determined with the institutions that make up the Interagency Statistical Committee on Crime (CEIC), which defines the standardized methodology for calculating those figures (see diagram 5).

### Diagram 5

Peru: process of registration, compilation, consolidation, validation and calculation of the number of victims of gender-based violence and the femicide rate, 2022



**Source:** Interagency Statistical Committee on Crime (CEIC), *Perú: femicidio y violencia contra la mujer 2015–2020*, Lima, 2023.

It should be kept in mind that the figures provided by States must be considered taking into account a general backdrop of a construction and refinement process of robust measurement systems, in which interagency coordination and data interoperability are challenges that requires capacity-building and increased technical and financial resources.

## G. Femicidal violence can be prevented with robust and forceful state responses

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in general recommendation No. 28 (2010), established that "States may also be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation". Likewise, in general recommendation No. 35 (2017) it specifically noted the duty of States to "establish a system to regularly collect, analyse and publish statistical data on the number of complaints about all forms of gender-based violence against women, including technology-mediated violence, the number and type of orders of protection issued, the rates of dismissal and withdrawal of complaints, prosecution and conviction and the amount of time taken for the disposal of cases. The system should include information on the sentences imposed on perpetrators and the reparations, including compensation, provided to victims/survivors. All data should be disaggregated by type of violence, relationship between the victim/survivor and the perpetrator, and in relation to intersecting forms of discrimination against women and other relevant sociodemographic characteristics, including the age of the victim/survivor. The analysis of the data should enable the identification of failures in protection and serve to improve and further develop preventive measures, which should, if necessary, include the establishment or designation of observatories for the collection of administrative data on the gender-based

killings of women, also referred to as “femicide” or “feminicide”, and “attempted killings of women”. In that regard, information systems on gender-based violence should apply an intersectional approach that takes into account the multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination that violate the rights of women and girls in all their diversity.

In this framework, in order to produce quality statistical information on femicides, feminicides, or gender-related killings of women, it is essential to go beyond knowledge of the number and sociodemographic characteristics of the victims of femicidal violence. As with all forms and characteristics of gender-based violence against women and girls, there is a precise need to know a series of key data linked to these characteristics, those of the assailants, the relationship between them, the contexts, the modus operandi or circumstances of the crime, and, in particular, whether the victim had filed a previous complaint or report against the assailant. Likewise, it is necessary to know the processes in place for filing complaints or seeking precautionary measures.

Unfortunately, only 3 out of 19 Latin American countries report data from official sources on the existence of prior complaints of violence or precautionary measures in femicide investigations, in order to assess the effectiveness of the services and agencies that receive and process them, as well as for weighing the possibility of taking timely action in high-risk situations to prevent the murder of women and girls. In the case of Brazil, a reform of Law No. 11340 (Maria da Penha Law) in 2018 introduced specific measures to criminalize the failure to comply with emergency protective measures.

The Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina is one of the exceptions; in 2021, it stated that “at least 3 of the 21 direct victims of femicide in the City of Buenos Aires had brought formal complaints against their assailants prior to being murdered, that is, in at least 14% of the cases of femicide that occurred in the city” (Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, 2021). In Chile, prior complaints were made in 34% of femicides committed, according to data for 2021 provided by the Undersecretariat for Crime Prevention (Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Gender Equity and others, 2022).<sup>6</sup> In Uruguay, according to the statistics department of the Ministry of the Interior, in 2022, 37% of victims had made prior complaints.

Prior history information on gender-based violence against women and girls aids in the design of public policies with targeted interventions to prevent, detect and act in high-risk situations, and serve as early warnings for assessing femicide risk. Such mechanisms are found in institutional systems and processes designed to identify and address in a timely manner situations of gender-based violence against women and girls before they escalate to more serious levels. Through them, state efforts to protect and ensure the safety and human rights of women and girls are strengthened in programmatic and budgetary terms.

Early alerts can target the application of procedures to assess the level of risk of violence to victims when receiving attention, with a view to providing them with care and protection to avert a more serious situation that might endanger their well-being. In that regard, countries have made progress in the implementation of standardized risk measurement instruments that use scales to offer different levels of care consistent with that measurement.

This is the case in Argentina, which incorporated such a module in its Integrated System for Reporting Cases of Gender-based Violence (SICVG). The SICVG consists of a tool to systematize information on consultations or complaints about gender-based violence throughout the country, in order to provide relevant data for the design and monitoring of public policies related to this issue (DTRYBD, 2020). The module uses a risk measurement model to predict, in the long term, both the risk of death or the possibility that new attacks may occur, and an increase in the intensity of violence, based on two main dimensions: threat (violent behaviours, frequency, onset and duration of each type of violence) and vulnerability (economic, social, sociodemographic and psychological, as well as the circumstances surrounding the person caught in violence and its effects on them). Either dimension, in turn, is divided into sub-dimensions that are measured on the basis of a set of variables that summarize and quantify their component elements. These variables are weighted using a somewhat flexible risk assessment model that can be adjusted by the persons providing assistance to the victim.

In Colombia, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine and Science developed a protocol for assessing the risk of lethal violence to women at the hands of a partner or former partner. This tool is in use in 17 cities in the country, where it is applied in response to a request from the competent authority, which asks a medical

<sup>6</sup> The data for Chile is not complete because the Valparaíso region does not have information available.

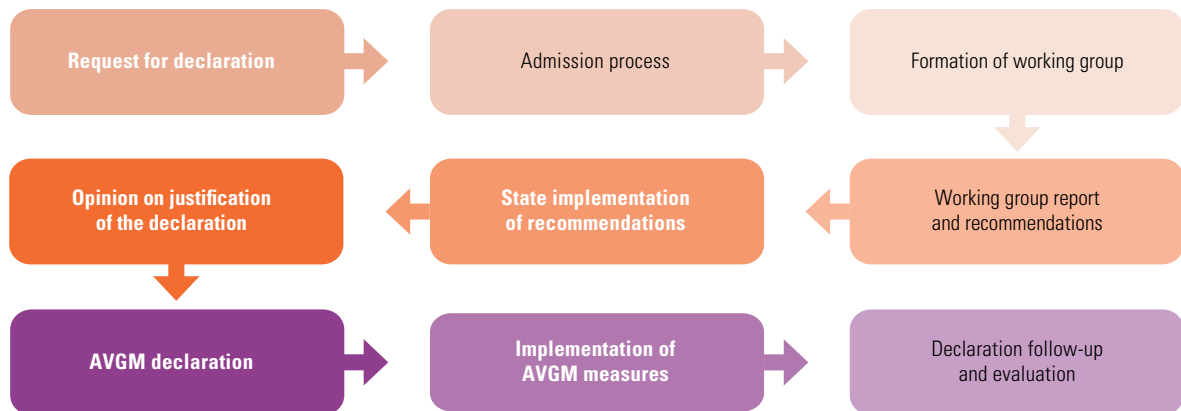
examiner to perform a medico-legal examination. In addition to a questionnaire to measure the level of risk, victims undergo a semi-structured interview in which they are questioned about different moments and stages of their life, their support network, their coping strategies and their views of the violence, among other factors that may constitute vulnerability or protection factors. A holistic analysis of the information enables the victim's situation to be identified on a scale encompassing four levels of risk, and on that basis suggestions are made as to the care services required. In addition, the Attorney General's Office developed a protocol for the identification and activation of the risk route and the completion of a risk identification form in cases of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence against women.

There are early alert systems whose objective is to strengthen public programmes and policies to effectively address situations of gender-based violence that may have increased in a given land territory. These systems work by collecting and analysing relevant information, such as previous reports of gender-based violence, the number of cases of femicide and their increase in a given period, and the existence and frequency of visits to public health care facilities.

Some countries in the region have designed and implemented initiatives of this sort. Mexico led the way in 2007 by incorporating in the General Law on Women's Access to a Violence-Free Life a mechanism known as the Gender Violence against Women Alert (AVGM); the procedure for issuing such an alert is described in the regulations governing the Law's implementation. The Law requires the State to adopt measures to ensure the right of women to live free of violence, and to coordinate those measures across the three levels of government: federal, state and municipal (Spotlight Initiative, 2021) (see diagram 6).

#### Diagram 6

Mexico: phases of the Gender Violence against Women Alert (AVGM) procedure, 2021



**Source:** Spotlight Initiative, Análisis del Mecanismo de Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres (AVGM), 2021 [online] <https://hchr.org.mx/publicaciones/analisis-del-mecanismo-de-alerta-de-violencia-de-genero-contra-las-mujeres-avgm/>.

As of October 2021, 25 alerts had been declared in 22 Mexican entities that include 643 municipalities. As a result of the 25 declarations issued between 2015 and that date, 552 measures were recommended to governments and local autonomous bodies to implement in their territories in order to help reduce femicidal violence. Of those 552 measures, 208 were preventive, 190 were to provide justice and reparations to family members, victims and survivors of femicidal violence, and 154 were security-related (National Institute for Women, 2021).

In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Comprehensive Act No. 348 of 9 March 2013 on a violence-free life for women and its implementing regulations (2015) establish that in the face of a situation of extreme violence, an anti-violence alert must be declared. This measure enables actions to be taken for prevention, care and protection in accordance with the Alert Action Plan, along with budget amendments to reduce the rates of violence.

In Ecuador, the Femicide Early Warning System (SAT AF) is in the process of being designed. Its objective is to identify possible victims through analysis of administrative records of public care facilities in order to trace

the first manifestations of violence and evaluate the risk to women subjected to serious violence who could become victims of femicide. The SAT AF is linked to the country's Consolidated Registry of Violence against Women and the recently implemented Femicide Registry.

Although the regional experience in the implementation of these instruments is incipient, early warning systems for the prevention of gender-based violence against women, particularly femicide, are an essential tool, as they enable a proactive response and prevent situations of risk from escalating. However, if they are to be an effective instrument these systems must be backed by sound policies, human and financial resources and a permanent commitment from the authorities, the media and society at large.

Another aspect to consider when analysing data on State action concerns reparation measures implemented by States to protect indirect victims, particularly children and adolescents under 18 years of age and other dependants in the care of the femicide victims. It is important to keep in mind that in every gender-related killing of women there are people who are especially affected.

The job of caring for children and dependent persons is mainly performed by women, as a result of traditional gender-related strictures expressed through the sexual division of labour and the unjust social organization of care, which often includes economic responsibility. In this sense, the death of a woman by femicide or feminicide, in addition to violating her right to life, places her children at risk. It is crucial for States to assume the commitment and responsibility of caring for these children, providing the resources and attention needed for these victims to overcome the trauma they have undergone and move forward to live a dignified life.

Policies and regulations that seek to provide some form of reparation for this phenomenon are a fundamental public response to ensure the rights of all to a life free of violence and to adequate access to justice. Reparations for indirect victims of femicide or feminicide range from monetary compensation to the provision of legal, social and health services, including mental health services, for full recovery.<sup>7</sup>

In Latin America, seven countries have legal frameworks and public policies for reparations so that the children and other dependants of women who are victims of femicide receive financial compensation and comprehensive care from the State (see table 2). Countries that have laws punishing those responsible for the crime in order to repair the damage are excluded.

**Table 2**

Latin America (8 countries): regulations on State reparations to indirect victims of femicide or gender-related killings, latest available year

Country	Regulations
Argentina	Law No. 27452, known as the Brisa Law (2018)
Brazil	Law No. 14717 of October 31, 2023, which introduces a special allowance for children and dependants under 18 years of age who have been orphaned as a result of femicides (2023)
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Law No. 348, Article 36, which provides for a system of protection for girls, boys and the whole family who are victims of femicide committed by a spouse or cohabitant (2013)
Costa Rica	Law for Comprehensive Reparations for Survivors of Femicide (Law No. 10263) (2022)
Chile	Law No. 21565, which establishes a system of protection and comprehensive reparation for femicide and femicidal suicide victims and their families (2023)
Ecuador	Decree No. 696, through which the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion provides an allowance for minors under 18 who are indirect victims of femicide (2018)
Peru	Emergency Decree No. 005–2020, which guarantees basic economic assistance for children, adolescents and persons with disabilities who are indirect victims of the crime of femicide (from 2020)
Uruguay	Law No. 18850, which establishes that the children of persons who have died as a result of domestic violence shall be entitled to reparation benefits (2011)

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Regulations" [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/laws>.

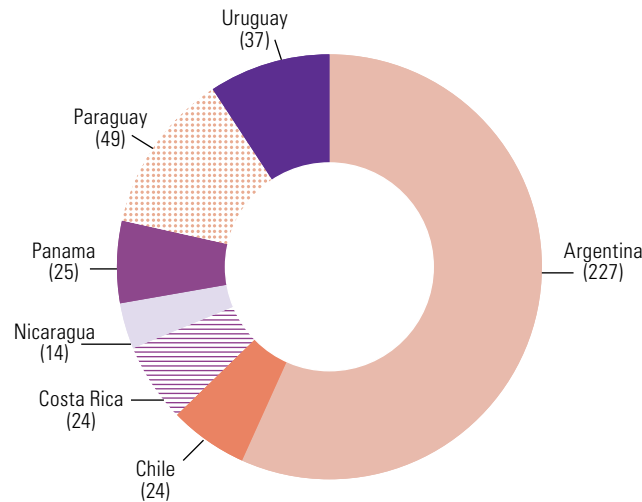
<sup>7</sup> The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean defines indirect victims as children, adolescents and other dependants in the care of femicide victims; however, it does not request information on indirect victims "who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization" (Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985).

Data from 7 Latin American countries and territories for 2022 account for 400 indirect victims of femicides or femicides; however, as yet there is no correlated information to indicate what state reparation actions were implemented that year (see figure 5).

**Figure 5**

Latin America (7 countries): indirect victims of femicide, 2022

(Absolute numbers)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

## H. Moving towards a care society requires transforming discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns

For the past 45 years, governments, the United Nations, international agencies, civil society organizations—particularly women's and feminist organizations and movements—and the academic sector have been meeting in the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result of these meetings, a Regional Gender Agenda has been agreed upon that positions Latin America and the Caribbean as the only world region with an ambitious, in-depth, comprehensive roadmap to guide countries' public policies for gender equality, the guarantee of the rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, the exercise of their autonomy, and the sustainable development of the region.

At the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in November 2022, ECLAC member States adopted the Buenos Aires Commitment, which charts a path towards a care society, with agreements for transformative recovery with gender equality and sustainability. It recognizes care as a right to provide and receive care and to exercise self-care. It calls for the promotion of measures to overcome the sexual division of labour and move towards a fair social organization of care, in the framework of a new development model that fosters gender equality in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (ECLAC, 2023).

The unfair sexual division of labour, a structural web that reproduces gender inequalities through a social organization that assigns paid and unpaid domestic work and care work to women, is reinforced by the web of patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns. These webs produce practices and discourse that assign strictures and environments that limit the full exercise of the human rights of women and girls. These sexist, discriminatory patterns, which shape a culture of privilege, sustain the persistence of gender-based violence and undermine the efforts of women and girls to achieve autonomy. Harmful practices such as early

and forced child marriage and unions affecting one in five girls in the region and their effects in terms of the limits on the integral development of girls and adolescents who are married or living in unions show that these inequalities are reproduced at a very early age.

The Buenos Aires Commitment recognizes that the path towards a care society requires States to move forward with robust policies aimed at changing the discriminatory and violent culture for one that recognizes and respects the dignity of women, girls and all people as a basic foundation in the construction of a development style focused on the sustainability of life.

“Promote the adoption and implementation of laws, policies, comprehensive and multisectoral action plans and educational awareness-raising programmes to prevent, address, punish and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, adolescent girls and girls in all their diversity, in different areas and manifestations, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage and early unions”.

**Buenos Aires Commitment, fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022**

Moving towards a care society involves strengthening the role of States in meeting their obligations to prevent, punish, redress and eradicate gender-based violence against women and girls, since the sustainability of life requires ensuring the well-being and dignity of all people.

It is important to recognize the significant progress made in terms of the regulations that criminalise and punish this offence. At the same time, however, gender-based violence against women and girls persists in the region, even though this violation of rights is preventable and unacceptable. Therefore, it is essential that the States continue to improve registry and information systems, increase budgetary resources for public policies that comprehensively address the victims and survivors of violence against women, however and wherever it occurs, and invest in effective prevention, strengthening risk assessment and effective protection and reparation measures for victims, and their access to medical, psychosocial, legal assistance and other services, as well as to educational, economic and employment opportunities.

Timely information can save lives, which is why the development of monitoring mechanisms, information interoperability and individual risk and danger assessment systems, together with femicidal violence alerts, are promising practices that are being implemented in some countries and can be extended to other countries in the region.



## Bibliography

- Bueno, S. and others (2023), "O crescimento de todas as formas de violência contra a mulher em 2022", *Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública 2023*, São Paulo, Brazilian Forum on Public Security.
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2010), "General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW/C/GC/28).
- \_\_\_\_\_(2017), "General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19" (CEDAW/C/GC/35).
- DTRYBD (Directorate of Records and Databases) (2020), "Sistema Integrado de Casos de Violencia por Motivos de Género (SICVG): módulo predictor de riesgo" [online] [https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/12/sicvg\\_modulo\\_predictor\\_de\\_riesgo.pdf](https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/12/sicvg_modulo_predictor_de_riesgo.pdf).
- ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (2023), *Buenos Aires Commitment (LC/CRM.15/6/Rev.1)*, Santiago.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2022), *Breaking the statistical silence to achieve gender equality by 2030: Application of the information systems pillar of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (LC/CRM.15/4)*, Santiago.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2017), *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (LC/CRM.13/5)*, Santiago.
- INEI (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics) (2023), *Perú: Femicidio y Violencia contra la Mujer. 2015 – 2022* [online] <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/inei/informes-publicaciones/4712489-peru-femicidio-y-violencia-contra-la-mujer-2015-2022>.
- Ministry of Social Development (2023), "Cantidad de femicidios u homicidios de mujeres por violencia de género" [online] <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-desarrollo-social/indicador/cantidad-femicidios-u-homicidios-mujeres-violencia-genero>.
- Ministry for Women and Human Rights (2023), "Estadísticas de femicidios en Ecuador" [online] <https://www.derechoshumanos.gob.ec/estadisticas-de-femicidios-en-ecuador/>.
- Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equity and others (2022), *Circuito Intersectorial de Femicidios: informe anual 2021* [online] <https://minmujeryeg.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Informe-Anual-CIF-2021.pdf>.
- National Institute for Women (2021), "Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres", 24 October [online] <https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres/acciones-y-programas/alerta-de-violencia-de-genero-contra-las-mujeres-80739>.
- National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (2017), "Valoración del riesgo de violencia mortal contra mujeres por parte de su pareja o expareja: prevención secundaria", *Boletín Epidemiológico* [online] <https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/documents/20143/57992/aci%C3%B3n+del+riesgo+de+violencia+mortal+contra+mujeres+por+parte+de+su+pareja+o+expareja+Prevenci%C3%B3n+secundaria.pdf>.
- OAS (Organization of American States) (1994), "Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women 'Convention of Belém do Pará'" [online] <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>.
- Spotlight Initiative (2021), *Análisis del Mecanismo de Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres (AVGM)* [online] <https://hchr.org.mx/publicaciones/analisis-del-mecanismo-de-alerta-de-violencia-de-genero-contra-las-mujeres-avgm/>.
- Spotlight Initiative Latin America Regional Programme (2021), *Femicidios/femicidios en América Latina: de las leyes a la transformación social*, Panama City.
- Supreme Court of Justice (2023), *Registro Nacional de Femicidios de la Justicia Argentina: edición 2022*, Office for Women [online] <https://om.csjn.gob.ar/consultaTalleresWeb/public/documentoConsulta/verDocumentoById?idDocumento=170>.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2021), "Investigación inédita sobre denuncias y medidas de protección de víctimas de femicidio", 26 February [online] <https://www.csjn.gov.ar/om/verNoticia.do?idNoticia=4702>.
- WHO (World Health Organization) (2021), *Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018: global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. Executive summary*, Geneva.

The authors are grateful for contributions made by the regional offices of the following United Nations entities: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the preparation of this document is also gratefully acknowledged.

This publication should be cited as: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Preventing femicides: an obligation for States and a persistent challenge in the region", *Femicidal Violence in Figures: Latin America and the Caribbean*, No. 2, Santiago, 2023.

Copyright © United Nations, 2023

23-01023



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)  
Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)  
[www.cepal.org/en](http://www.cepal.org/en)

