Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability

Observatoire canadien du fémicide pour la justice et la responsabilisation

106 Women and Girls Killed by Violence: Eight-Month Report by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability

HIGHLIGHTS

- During the first eight months of 2018, 106 women and girls were killed in Canada, primarily by men. On average, this means that one woman or girl is killed every other day in this country, a consistent trend during the past four decades.

- There is increasing attention to the vulnerability of older women because of their growing representation in the population. Almost one-third of the femicide victims were aged 55 and older, supporting the recognized need for priority attention to this group of victims.

- Indigenous women and girls continue to be overrepresented as victims of femicide.

- Almost half of the femicide victims were killed in their homes. This means that women are at greatest risk where they should feel safest.

- Shooting was the most common method of killing where this information was documented.

- One-third of identified accused were male partners of the victims. Three-quarters of these accused were still in an intimate partner relationship with the victim and one-quarter were in dating relationships. These patterns underscore the importance of pending *Criminal Code* changes to capture dating relationships and current legislation which directs judges to treat intimacy as an aggravating factor at sentencing.

Acknowledgements

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The *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability* (CFOJA) was launched on Dec. 6, 2017. Its overall mandate is to establish a visible and national focus on femicide in Canada. There are two overarching objectives: (1) To document femicides as they occur; and, (2) To monitor state and social responses to these killings. [1]

The CFOJA defines femicide as the killing of women and girls *because* they are women and girls primarily, but not exclusively, by men (see https://femicideincanada.ca/home/what). There is no agreed upon definition of femicide and international discussions continue about what parameters should be used to identify femicide (Sarmiento et al., 2014). [2] As such, in line with international data and for tracking purposes, we count all killings of women and girls until more detail becomes available about the circumstances of the killing and/or more specific criteria for what constitutes a femicide are agreed upon.

In this report, to capture varying definitions, we first describe the deaths of all women and girls killed by violence [3] that we have been able to identify and document. However, after gaining more information about the context and circumstances of their killings, some of these deaths may not subsequently meet the parameters of the definition of femicide. [4] Second, we examine those deaths that fall within the parameters of what is recognized internationally as the most common type of femicide – what many refer to as 'intimate femicide' or women killed by current or former male partners.

The data on the killings of women and girls described below were drawn from media reports. Research on the reliability and validity of media reports as a source of data is summarized and discussed in Appendix A. In short, this research shows that media reports are as reliable and valid as official reports for specific types of information (e.g. gender, age, method of killing, location, etc.) and more so for documenting the relationship between the victim and accused.

Given the recent nature of some of the femicides described below, limited information is currently available. Data are and will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

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[1] For more information on the activities of the CFOJA, please visit https://www.femicideincanada.ca/home/what.

[2] The *Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-Related Killings of Women* (hereafter referred to as LAP) is one of the most comprehensive documents to date to lay out definitions and parameters for femicide and its subtypes. For their purposes, the term femicide is understood as: "The murder of women because they are women, whether it is committed within the family, a domestic partnership, or any other interpersonal relationship, or by anyone in the community, or whether it is perpetrated or tolerated by the state or its agenda" (pg. 14). The LAP has identified various parameters and indicators, but discussions are ongoing about whether and how such parameters might be captured in law and research.

[3] Deaths that occur due to motor vehicle crashes or collisions are not included in our data unless there is evidence that the act was clearly intentional. The eight women who were mowed down on April 23, 2018 in Toronto by a man driving a van are included in our data because the act was intentional.

[4] For example, two mass shootings occurred in Canada in July and August. In July, two women were killed and many others injured by a man who opened fire on people on Toronto's Danforth Avenue. In August, a man shot and killed four people, including two women, in a mass shooting in Fredericton. Together, these incidents resulted in the deaths of four women and girls. However, motives remain unclear at this time and, while included in the total sample, these deaths may not subsequently fall within the parameters of a narrower definition of femicide.

Why focus only on the deaths of women and girls?

The most common question we are asked when we discuss femicide is how many men and boys are killed in comparison. We are aware of the fact that men and boys are killed at greater rates than women and girls. We believe these deaths are also an important focus of violence prevention efforts.

However, the following points underscore why femicide remains our core focus:

1. Femicide is a distinct form of homicide that warrants its own label. When women and girls are killed, it is almost always by men in the context of their intimate relationships and/or the result of sexual violence. This is very different from the killings of men, which are more commonly the result of male-on-male violence by friends, acquaintances and strangers, a finding that is consistently documented nationally (David, 2017) and internationally (UNODC 2013).

2. Given the above, regardless of whether the homicide victims are women or men, the perpetrators are most commonly, and overwhelmingly, men. As such, men are commonly both victims and perpetrators of homicide. Women are primarily victims.

3. Finally, the CFOJA is the only Canadian initiative responding to the international call from the United Nations for every country to establish femicide watches or observatories to more comprehensively and accurately document these deaths (ACUNS, 2017).

Structure of this Report

Section I of the report below focuses on all 106 women and girls killed from January 1 to August 31, 2018. We caution that the number of killings identified and documented in this report is considered a minimum estimate for at least two reasons.

First, we found information related to 12 deaths of women and girls that have been deemed suspicious by police, but no further information has become available and/or investigations are ongoing. These victims have not been included in the current report, but their deaths will be monitored for further information. It is likely that some of these women and girls are femicide victims.

Second, some femicides have not yet been reported or discovered, including those that may involve women and girls who have disappeared. This fact is most clearly demonstrated by the number of missing or disappeared Indigenous women and girls (National Inquiry MMIWG, 2017; NWAC, 2010).

At the time of writing this report, some cases remain unsolved. The information about the victims in these cases is included in the results below. Their perpetrators remain at large; therefore, the characteristics of the accused and their relationship to the victim remain unknown at this time. These cases will be monitored for new information and data updated accordingly.

Section II of the report focuses only on those women killed in the context of their intimate relationships with men – most often referred to as 'intimate femicide' – which represents one of the most common types of femicide in Canada (David, 2017; Dawson, 2016a) and internationally (Sarmiento et al., 2014; UNODC, 2013).

In the first eight months of 2018, 106 women and girls have been killed in Canada, primarily by men. On average, this is one woman or girl killed every other day in this country – a consistent trend for four decades. [5]

All of the women and girls are remembered at the end of this report (and see https://femicideincanada.ca/2018report). For most women and girls, we include their names when publicly identified or released. For some victims, this was not possible because they have not been identified in the media and/or their names have not been released to the media. This is a growing trend in some police jurisdictions. [6]

Focusing on these women and girls, the following patterns were documented:

Patterns over time and by geography

Temporal distribution: The number of women and girls killed each month ranged from six to 17 victims. Specifically, Table 1 shows that there were 17 victims in January, 6 victims in February, 13 victims in March, 16 victims in April, 15 victims in May, 11 victims in June, 15 in July and 13 in August.

Table 1: Temporal distribution of women and girls	
Month	**Number Women & Girls Killed**
January	17
February	6
March	13
April	16
May	15
June	11
July	15
August	13
Total	106

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[5] See https://theconversation.com/everyday-terrorism-a-woman-or-girl-is-killed-every-other-day-in-canada-96329.
[6] For example, see https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/police-often-keep-murder-suicides-hidden-fromview/article31702496/.

Geographic distribution: Table 2 shows that the largest group of women and girls (50%) were killed in Ontario, a pattern that is consistently documented for Canada's most populous province. About 40 percent of the country's population lives in Ontario which is almost evenly split between women and men residents. These numbers show that the number of femicide victims in 2018 is disproportionate to their representation in the population. One reason for this is that the eight femicide victims killed in Toronto on Monday, April 23, 2018 are included in these data. [7]

Alberta and Quebec had the second highest number of femicide victims so far in 2018, each with 11 percent of the total. Eight percent of the femicides took place in Manitoba, followed by British Columbia with six percent, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan each with four percent of the victims, Nova Scotia and Nunavut with three percent each of the total and Yukon with one percent.

To date, in 2018, based on media reviewed, there were no known femicides in Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories or Newfoundland/Labrador.

Table 2: Geographic distribution of women and girls killed in Canada as of Aug. 31, 2018[1]

Province	Number Killed	% of femicides
Ontario	53	50
Alberta	12	11
Quebec	12	11
Manitoba	8	8
British Columbia	6	6
New Brunswick	4	4
Saskatchewan	4	4
Nova Scotia	3	3
Nunavut	3	3
Yukon	1	1

[1]There were no documented femicides in Newfoundland-Labrador, Northwest Territories or Prince Edward Island. Percentage will not equal 100 due to rounding.

For visual of geographic distribution, see Canadian map of 2018 femicides date at:
https://femicideincanada.ca/2018map

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[7] See https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/24/americas/toronto-van-attack-victims/index.html.

Demographic characteristics of victims and accused

Age of victim: The victims ranged in age from two years old to 94 years old with an average age of 42 years. Figure 1 shows that the age group representing the largest proportion of femicide victims were those aged 25 to 34 years (25%), followed by 55-64 years (18%), 18-24 years (15%), 35-44 (13%), 65 and older (13%) and 45-54 (9%). Seven percent of the victims were aged 17 and younger, representing the smallest age group.

There has been increasing attention to the vulnerability of older women given their growing representation in the population, particularly to femicide (ACUNS, 2017). While cut-off ages vary, 55 and older has commonly been used to denote older women (e.g. Sutton & Dawson 2017). Using this threshold, our data show that almost one-third (or 31 percent) of the femicide victims were in this age group. While currently consistent with their representation in the population, older women represent a subgroup whose proportions will continue to accelerate until 2031 (Hudon & Milan, 2016). Given there is limited research in Canada focusing on older women and their vulnerability to violence, this is highlighted as a research priority for violence prevention.

Figure 1: Age Distribution for Victims (N=106)

Race/ethnicity of the victim: Information for race/ethnicity was missing in 38 percent (or 40 cases) of the total sample. Examining cases in which the victim's race/ethnicity was reported, 38 femicide victims were Caucasian/white (58%), 15 were Indigenous women or girls (22%), and 16 were a visible minority[8] (23%) (*see Appendix A for discussion on reliability of race/ethnicity in media reports*).

According to distributions in Canada, where information is known, Caucasian/white victims are underrepresented (58% compared to 73% of Canada's population) whereas the proportion of victims with visible minority status is consistent with their representation in the population (23% compared to 22% of population[9]). In contrast, and consistent with other research (NWAC, 2010), Indigenous women and girls (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) are overrepresented given that they

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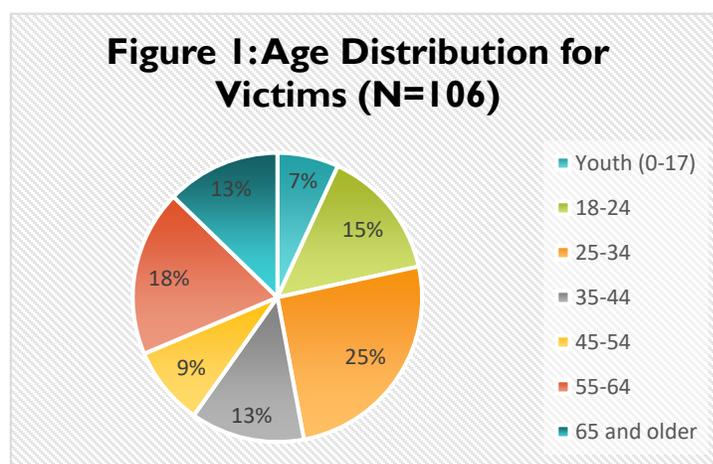
[8] 'Visible minority' applies to persons who are identified according to the *Employment Equity Act* as being non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Under the Act, Aboriginal persons are not considered members of visible minority groups. For more information: https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/concepts/definitions/previous/preminority.

[9] See https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm.

comprise 22% of the victims of femicide but less than five percent of the population[10] in Canada. This is not a new trend, but consistent over time (for more detail, see https://femicideincanada.ca/about/trends).

Gender of the accused: Focusing on the primary accused[11] in each of the 97 cases for which the accused gender is known, 90 percent were men and 10 percent were women, consistent with national figures (David, 2017). In nine cases, the gender of the accused is not yet known.

Age of the accused: Where information was available, the age of the accused ranged from 18 to 81 years old with an average age of 37 years old.[12] As shown in Figure 2, the largest proportion of accused were aged 25-34 (35%), followed by those aged 18-24 (20%) and 35-44 (20%) with similar representations. Those aged 55-64 (10%), those 65 and older (8%) and those aged 45-54 (7%) comprised the remainder of the group.[13]

Figure 2: Age Distribution for Accused (N=106)
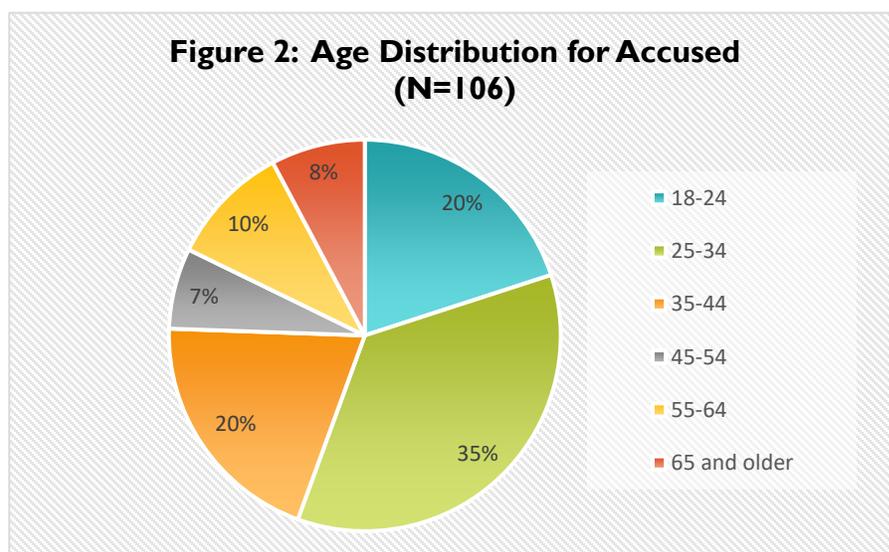
Race/ethnicity of the accused: Information is missing in two-thirds of the cases (67%) for the race/ethnicity of the accused. As such, the reliability of this information is not sufficient to report given that, if information were available, distributions might change significantly.

Relationship between the victim and the accused: Consistent with other countries, when the relationship was known, Figure 3 shows that the most common type of femicide (31%) involved women who were killed by a current or former male intimate partner referred to as 'intimate femicide' which will be examined in more detail in Section II.

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[10] See https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14313-eng.htm.

[11] The primary accused designation is used when there were multiple perpetrators, but one perpetrator was more dominant in the killing and/or shared the closest relationship to the victim.

[12] Refers to primary perpetrator only.

[13] The age of 13 of the accused remains unknown, including those for which the case remains unsolved.

The second largest category of victims were killed by strangers (16%)[14] followed by other family members (13% of which 5% were parents) and friends/acquaintances (7%). It was not possible to determine the victim-accused relationship in about one-quarter of the cases. Of this group, as shown in Figure 3, eight percent remain unsolved and 25 percent of the cases did not yet have a relationship specified in the media reviewed.

Characteristics of the incident

Number of victim and accused: Consistent with most other countries, the majority of femicides involve a single victim and a single accused. Specifically, in 2018, almost three-quarters of the cases (73%) involved one victim with the remaining cases involving two or more victims. Where information was known, 91 percent of the cases involved a single accused with the remaining cases involving two to four accused.

Figure 3: Victim-Accused Relationship (N=106)

- Intimate Femicide
- Other Family
- Friends, Acquaintances
- Strangers
- Unspecified
- Unsolved

Method: Information is not yet available on the method of killing in 37 percent of the cases. Examining only those cases where information was known, shooting (32%), stabbing (29%), and beating (22%) were the most common methods. In cases that involved shootings (n=21), when gun type was reported, handguns (N=5) and long guns (N=4) were almost equally represented.

Location: During the eight months examined, out of the 106 cases, almost one-quarter (24%) of the victims were killed in their own home and an equal proportion (24%) in a home that they shared with the accused. Another 18 percent of the victims were killed outdoors (e.g. parks, field, on street, etc.). The location of the killing remains unknown in 14 percent of the cases.

Case status: Of the 106 cases, eight percent of the cases remain unsolved. In 12 percent of the cases, the accused committed suicide following the femicide. In an additional four percent of the cases, the accused has since died. In the remaining cases, charges have been laid or charges are pending.

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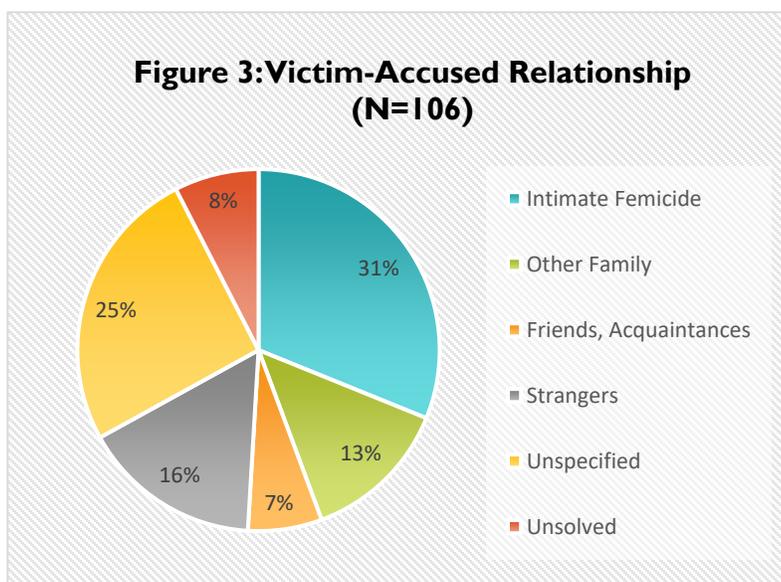
[14] This includes the eight women killed in the April 23, 2018 Toronto attack in which a lone male drove a van and mowed down 10 victims, including two males. The accused is a stranger to all of his victims.

Section II

Patterns in Intimate Femicide

Worldwide, women face the greatest risk of femicide in the context of their intimate relationships with men and this is true for women in Canada as well. In the first eight months of 2018, 33 femicides – almost one-third of the 106 killings (31%) – were intimate femicides.

Figure 4: Type of Relationship (N=33)

- 36% — Legal Spouse
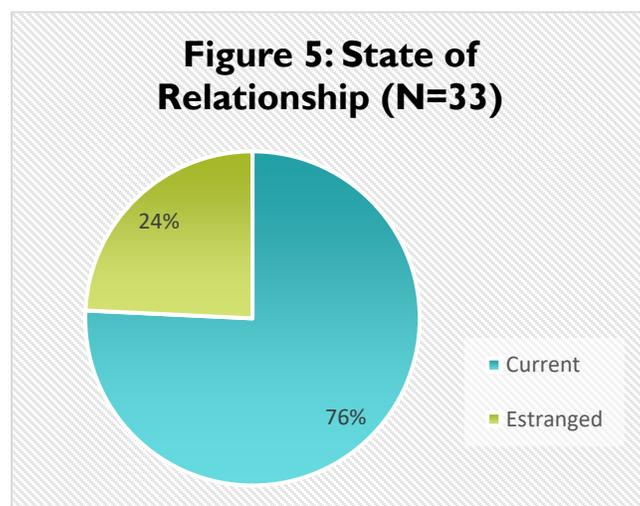- 40% — Common Law
- 24% — Dating
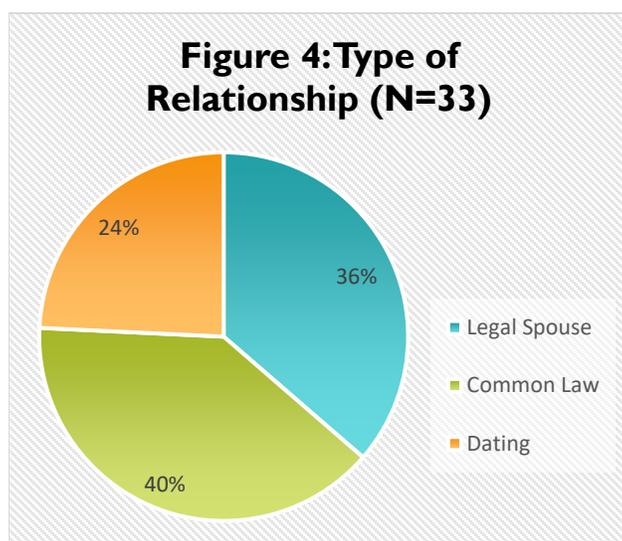
Internationally, it is recognized that most of these cases involve chronic violence and abuse in the relationship, threats and/or intimidation, and sexual violence (WHO, 2012). These situations are exacerbated by gender and other inequalities (e.g. race/ethnicity, age, disability) which result in women having less power and/or fewer resources than men generally, and their male partners specifically.

Of these 33 cases, as shown in Figure 4, 12 victims (or 36%) were or had been legally married to the accused, 13 victims (or 40%) were or had been in common-law relationships and eight victims (or 24%) were in a current or former dating relationship with the accused. The proportion of dating relationships underscores 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 also capture dating relationships.[15]

Comparing current and former relationships, Figure 5 illustrates that most accused were current partners of the victims. Specifically, 25 women were reportedly killed by a current male partner (76%) and eight women were killed by an estranged male partner (24%).

Figure 5: State of Relationship (N=33)

- 24% — Estranged
- 76% — Current

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[15] See https://w ww.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-new-legislation-aims-to-increase-protections-for-domestic-abuse/.

Demographic characteristics of those involved in intimate femicide[16]

Age of the victim: The victims ranged in age from 20 to 76 years old with an average age of 43 years. The age group representing the largest proportion of intimate femicide victims were those aged 25 to 34 years (25%), followed by the 18-24 and 45-54 age groups, each representing 19 percent of the victims. Another 16 percent of the victims were aged 55-64 years of age followed by those women aged 65 and older (13%). These latter two groups comprise a combined total of 29 percent of those aged 55 and up – an age group that captures elderly women who only recently have begun to attract attention as a group vulnerable to violence, both in and outside of their intimate relationships. Those aged 35-44 comprised nine percent of the sample.

Age of the accused: Where information was available, accused ranged in age from 21 to 81 years old with an average age of 45 years old. Similar to the victims, the largest proportion of accused were aged 25-34 (27%). The next largest group of accused were those aged 35-44 (24%) followed by those aged 55-64 and 65 and older (18% and 15% respectively), again underscoring the need to focus violence prevention efforts at elder populations. Those aged 18-24 (9%) and 45-64 (6%) comprised the remainder of the accused.

Characteristics of the incident

Number of victim and accused: Intimate femicides are largely single victim incidents and this was true of this sample (85%). There were several cases in which other victims, primarily other family members (e.g. children, parents), were also targeted and killed. All cases involved only a single accused.

Method: Where information was available on the method of killing (55% of the cases), like the larger sample, shooting (39%), stabbing (33%), and beating (22%) were the most common methods used.

Location: During the eight months examined, out of the 33 cases of intimate femicide, close to half of the victims were killed in the home they shared with the accused (46%) or in their own home (24%). Three percent of the victims were killed in the home of the accused. As such, about three-quarters of the intimate femicides occurred in a private location.

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[16] With this smaller sample, a greater proportion of cases are missing information on race/ethnicity; therefore, due to their unreliability, these figures are not provided.

Case status: Of the 33 cases, 10 (or 30%) ended with the accused committing suicide following the femicide and another case is a suspected intimate femicide-suicide. In one additional case, the accused has since died. In the remaining cases, charges have been laid or charges are pending.

The significant number of cases that involve women killed by male partners highlights the symbolic importance of s. 718.2(a)(ii) of the *Criminal Code* enacted in 1996 which directs judges to consider spousal or common-law relationships between the offender and the victim as an aggravating factor during sentencing. More recent proposed changes in Bill C-75 would see former intimate partners also included here with current partners, although this may have already been occurring in some courtrooms. While several studies have examined the impact of the initial amendment (see Dawson 2012, 2016b; Grant, 2017), it remains a research priority and is a key research focus of the CFOJA.

Conclusion

This report describes and summarizes trends and patterns in the killings of women and girls in Canada during the first eight months of 2018 as documented by the CFOJA using media reports. Some key patterns and trends are highlighted and are consistent with previous and current international research on femicide. In a recent publication by the Academic Council of the United Nations System (2018) in discussing femicide, it was stated:

"We all have a national and international obligation to put an end to such atrocities, to prosecute offenders and to lift up the many victims' shattered lives. Governments can and must provide 'safe places' for at-risk women and children" (p. 1).

As this report shows, Canada is no exception in this regard and has much work remaining to address femicide and other forms of violence against women and girls.

REMEMBERING...

106 Women and Girls Killed by Violence (January 1-August 31, 2018)

Barbara Kovic, 76, Etobicoke, ON (Jan 3)
Kristen Faye Cantre, 32, Indigenous, Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation, SK (Jan 7)
Name not released, 40, O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation, Crane River, MB (Jan 7)
Arlène Girard, 56, Sherbrooke, QC (Jan 8)
Louise Earle, 62, Brighton, ON (Jan 10)
Baljit Thandi, 32, Brampton, ON (Jan 12)
Avtar Kaur, 60, Brampton, ON (Jan 12)
Elaine Bellevue, 61, Mississauga, ON (Jan 13)
Holly Marie Hamilton, 29, Hamilton, ON (Jan 14)
Jan Singh, 70, Oakville, ON (Jan 17)
Angel Sandine Beaulieu, 22, Indigenous, Winnipeg, MB (Jan 18)
Deidra Ann Smith, 35, Highlands East Township, ON (Jan 21)
Deborah Irene Yorke, 63, Dartmouth, NS (Jan 21)
Hoden Dahir Said, 30, Brampton, ON (Jan 27)
Claire Hébert, 58, Gatineau, QC (Jan 28)
Name not released, 35, Indigenous, St. Theresa Point, Island Lake, MB (Jan 28)
Yun Yu, 61, LaSalle (Montreal), QC (Jan 28)
Safaa Marina, 53, Nepean, ON (Feb 4)
Agnes Sutherland, 62, Indigenous, Timmins, ON (Feb 4)
Maria Da Gloria Da Silva DeSousa, 81, Orleans, ON (Feb 10)
Ulla Theoret, 55, Ryerson Township, ON (Feb 23)
Raija Turunen, 88, Ryerson Township, ON (Feb 23)
Chelsey Tegan Alice Rose Bien, 25, Indigenous, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, YK (Feb 26)
Name not released, 21, Thicket Portage, MB (Mar 2)
Alicia Marie Lewandowski, 25, Mississauga, ON (Mar 5)
Essozinam Assali, 27, North York, ON (Mar 6)
Janice West, 62, Wiarton, ON (Mar 6)
Krassimira (Krissy) Pejcinovski, 39, Ajax, ON (Mar 14)
Venallia (Vana) Pejcinovski, 13, Ajax, ON (Mar 14)
Name not released, 9, Indigenous, Wemindji, QC (Mar 15)
Ruma Amar, 29, North York, ON (Mar 17)
Jennifer Lynne Semenec, 45, Springhill, NS (Mar 20)
Nadia El-Dib, 22, Malborough, AB (Mar 25)
Name not released, 51, Thompson, MB (Mar 26)

Raena Kalee Henry, 28, Indigenous, Squamish, BC (Mar 27)
Marian Fischer, Morris-Turnberry, ON (Mar 29)
Anne Rainville, 61, Marathon, ON (Apr 5)
Naomi Bartlette, 33, Moncton, NB (Apr 6)
Rosalie Gagnon, 2, Charlesbourg, QC (Apr 18)
Mary Lou Clauson, 61, Midale, SK (Apr 20)
Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Forsyth, 94, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Beutis Renuka Amarasingha, 45, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Andrea Bradden, 33, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Geraldine Brady, 83, North York, ON (Apr 23)
So He (Sohe) Chung, 22, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Anne Marie D'amico, 30, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Ji-Hun (Ji Hun) Kim, 22, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Dorothy Marie Sewell, 80, North York, ON (Apr 23)
Brittany Vande Lagemaat, 25, Kildare (Edmonton), AB (Apr 23)
Emily-Ann Anderson, 25, Sept-Îles, QC (Apr 23)
Kaylee Anderson Tooma, 3, Sept-Îles, QC (Apr 23)
Keri Smith, 36, Richmond, BC (Apr 30)
Name not released, 22, Indigenous, Iqaluit, NU (May 6)
Bigue Ndao, 33, Edmonton, AB (May 7)
Laura Jean Victoria Wigelsworth, 27, Vanastra, ON (May 10)
Name not released, 61, LaSalle (Montreal), QC (May 15)
Josephine Pelletier, 33, Indigenous, Calgary, AB (May 17)
Name not released, Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, AB (May 19)
Name not released, 23, Flin Flon, MB (May 19)
Angela Turner, 50, Charleswood, MB (May 21)
Abbegail Judith Elliott, 21, Toronto, ON (May 23)
Elisabeth Salm, 59, Ottawa, ON (May 24)
Rhoderie Estrada, 41, East York, ON (May 25)
Name not released, Iqaluit, NU (May 27)
Freda Joyes, 74, Spruce Grove, AB (May 27)
Christine Lynn Barker, 36, Winnipeg, MB (May 28)
Heeley Rae Balanga, 35, Kawartha Lakes, ON (May 29)
Name not released, Taloyoak, NU (June 8)
Brandy Sandra Robillard, 24, Indigenous, Black Lake First Nation, SK (June 10)
Victoria Selby-Readman, 28, Toronto, ON (June 10)
Autumn Marie Taggart, 31, Windsor, ON (June 10)
Chloe Labrie, 28, Kuujjuaq, QC (June 12)

Autumn Miranda Andy-Cheena, 15, Indigenous, Mishkosiminiziibiing First Nation, ON (June 13)

Darlene Norma Cardinal, 43, Lac La Biche, AB (June 22)

Nicole Chouinard, 71, Laval, QC (June 23)

Jenas Nyarko, 31, Toronto, ON (June 24)

Chantelle Almeida, 26, Vaughan, ON (June 29)

Michelle Marcino, 56, Buck Lake, AB (June 29)

Chloe Bellehumeur-Lemay, 22, Lanaudière, QC (July 1)

Ashley MacLean Kearse, 22, Cole Harbour, NS (July 2)

Crystal Louise McFadyen, 37, Saskatoon, SK (July 6)

Carla Rutherford, 64, Dundas, On (July 9)

Carrie Shannon Paton, 38, Blue Quill (Edmonton), AB (July 12)

Carolyn Campbell, 52, Toronto, ON (July 12)

Alyssa Lightstone, 20, Newmarket, ON (July 21)

Reese Fallon, 18, Toronto, ON (July 22)

Julianna Kozis, 10, Toronto, ON (July 22)

Rama Gauravarapu, West Kelowna, BC (July 22)

Aaliyah Rosa, 7, Langley, BC (Jul 22)

Brigitte Pelletier, 54, Dundee, NB (~July 28)

Kim Racine, 24, St-Isidore-de-la-Prairie, QC (July 29)

Taylor Toller, 24, Calgary, AB (July 26)

Shawn Boschuck, 52, Calgary, AB (July 31)

Chelsea Lynn De Forge, 31, Vancouver, BC (Aug 1)

Nancy Morgan, 59, Terrace, BC (Aug 2)

Amanda McClaskin, 36, Muskoka Lakes Township, ON (Aug 3)

Bobbie Lee Wright, 32, Fredericton, NB (Aug 10)

Sara Mae Helen Burns, 43, Fredericton, NB (Aug 10)

Ellie May House, 31, Indigenous, Paul First Nation Reserve, AB (Aug 14)

Elena Marcucci, 84, Etobicoke, ON (Aug 18)

Wendy Allan, 51, Kawartha Lakes, ON (Aug 19)

Edresilda (Edra) Haan, 58, Kitchener, ON (Aug 22)

Sandra Anne Finn, 70, Peterborough, ON (Aug 22)

Amelie Christelle Sakkalis, 28, Boston Bar, BC (Aug 22)

Amelia Corrie Sainnawap, 31, Thunder Bay, ON (Aug 22)

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Data sources

To track and describe femicide in Canada, this report relies primarily on media sources to document the initial incident, subsequent investigation and court processing of an accused if arrested. Additional information will be drawn from public court records when they become available upon the resolution of the criminal case.

With the growth of information technology, these sources are now easier to access and retrieve, either for free or for a small, monthly subscription fee. Given increasing reliance on media sources, the quality of information documented in the media has been compared to information contained in official sources. Although this research has largely been conducted in the US, similarities to the Canadian situation are likely. This research has shown that:

1. Demographic information, such as the gender and age of the victim and perpetrator, is often reported accurately in newspapers, aligning with national database statistics (Heide & Boots, 2007; Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017).

2. Race/ethnicity can be more difficult to determine based on newspaper articles alone due to editorial restrictions on how and when race/ethnicity can be reported. However, when comparing information extracted from newspapers to official US statistics, one study showed that it was possible to correctly identify the race/ethnicity of the victim in 90 per cent of cases based on newspapers alone (Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017). They argued that one reason for this may be that official statistics do not record race/ethnicity if it is not easily available.

3. Information can also be found on education, employment, prior criminal record, and whether the victim and/or perpetrator had children (Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017), but information may not be consistently reported. In fact, most news coverage only reports affirmative characteristics (e.g. whether the victim/perpetrator had a particular characteristic, such as a prior criminal record, children, etc.). However, this is also typically the case with official statistics.

4. Newspapers were found to be more informative than official data for determining the victim-perpetrator relationship. The relationship was specified in 80 percent of cases reported in the media compared to only 55 percent of cases included in official data (Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017).

5. Newspapers were also found to be useful for providing information about the situational context. For example, information extracted exclusively from police files may not provide the bigger picture because information is not recorded for research purposes, but rather to fulfill organizational requirements (Shon & Lee, 2016). In addition, a more complete picture of events may not be known at the time the official report was generated. For example,

the circumstances of the homicide may not be known early in the investigation, especially if a suspect has not been identified, and the initial report may not be updated when the investigation has concluded. This might be particularly problematic if the accused committed suicide following the killing and no trial follows.

Newspapers, on the other hand, are more likely to report the social and contextual details of the homicide as the investigation unfolds to construct an interesting story for their audiences (Shon & Lee, 2016). Another study by Genovesi et al. (2010) found that newspaper articles provided more context on the homicide circumstances than what was noted in medical examiner files.

6. The exact location (e.g. address) and the type of location (e.g., residence, outdoors) is often reported consistently across news sources (Heide & Boots, 2007; Huff-Corzine et al., 2014; Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017). This is an advantage compared to official data in which exact location is rarely specified and is reported at the census level.

In summary, there is general agreement in the literature that newspapers identify just as much, or more, information about the circumstances surrounding a homicide than what is included in official data sources (Genovesi et al., 2010; Huff-Corzine et al., 2014; Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017; Shon & Lee, 2016). In addition, there were similarities between the two data sources in terms of the information and circumstances listed, highlighting a high level of agreement and legitimacy to media/newspaper accounts.

Some limitations were also noted, however, again drawing primarily from US research:

1. Certain homicides may not receive coverage while others are sensationalized (Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017; Salari & Sillito, 2016).

2. Related to the first point, minority homicide victims and victims residing in low socio-economic communities are less likely to receive media coverage (Parkin & Gruenewald, 2017). However, it is important to recognize that these limitations are drawn from US-based literature. It is possible that Canadian news outlets report on most homicides given their relative infrequency compared to US homicide rates; however, the level of detail will likely vary by the characteristics of the victim and accused and the region of the country.

3. Journalists typically rely on police sources, may not interview those who knew the victim/perpetrator well, or may not contact violence against women agencies who may have been working with the victim, accused and/or the family (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Richards et al., 2011; Taylor, 2009). Therefore, the information shared by police may not be an accurate reflection of the interpersonal history of those involved, especially when there was a limited amount of police contact prior to the homicide (Taylor, 2009).

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