

Summary Report

Summary: Analytical Overview of Femicide Reporting in Kenya (January 1–31, 2024)

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This report examines media coverage of femicide in Kenya during January 2024, highlighting trends, legal frameworks, and ethical considerations in reporting. Femicide, defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender, has seen a disturbing rise in Kenya, with over 500 cases documented between 2016 and 2023. The report underscores the media's critical role in shaping public discourse, advocating for justice, and holding institutions accountable.

Key Findings:

1 . **Rising Femicide Cases**:

- 1 January 2024 saw a spike in femicide cases, including high-profile murders of women like Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni.
- 1 Data from OdipoDev.com reveals recurring patterns, with stabbing, hacking, and strangulation as common methods.
- 1 Nairobi, Kiambu, and Nakuru counties reported the highest incidents, though underreporting in other regions remains a challenge.

2. **Media Coverage Analysis**:

- 1 **Broadcast Media**: TV and radio stations provided extensive coverage, with panel discussions featuring experts from organizations like FIDA Kenya and the National Gender and Equality Commission. However, some outlets, such as Anguo FM and Kiss FM, were criticized for insensitive and sensational reporting.
- 1 **Print Media**: Outlets like *Taifa Leo* and *The Star* were flagged for sensational headlines and explicit details, violating journalistic ethics on grief and shock.
- 1 **Digital Media**: Hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen trended, amplifying calls for justice and highlighting patriarchal attitudes on social media.

3. **Legal and Ethical Framework**:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution (Articles 26, 27, and 28) guarantees the right to life, equality, and dignity, while laws like the Sexual Offences Act (2006) and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011) address gender-based violence.

- 1 International treaties, including CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, obligate Kenya to prevent and address femicide.
- 1 Despite these frameworks, gaps in enforcement and slow legal processes persist, undermining efforts to combat femicide.

4. ****Media's Role and Challenges****:

- 1 The media played a pivotal role in agenda-setting, creating awareness, and fostering public debate. However, some outlets prioritized sensationalism over ethical reporting, leading to victim-blaming and privacy violations.
- 1 The Media Council of Kenya emphasized the need for adherence to the Code of Conduct for Journalists, particularly in sensitive reporting.

5. ****Institutional Responses****:

- 1 Organizations like FIDA Kenya and the Zamara Foundation condemned the rise in femicide, calling for systemic changes and support systems for victims.
- 1 The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife initiated measures to regulate short-term rental accommodations, following femicide cases linked to Airbnb stays.

Conclusion:

The media's coverage of femicide in January 2024 was largely consistent and impactful, driving national discourse and demanding accountability. However, ethical lapses in reporting highlight the need for stricter adherence to professional standards. The report calls for sustained media engagement, improved legal enforcement, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to address the systemic issues underpinning femicide in Kenya.

Recommendations:

- 1 Strengthen enforcement of existing laws and policies on gender-based violence.
- 1 Enhance media training on ethical reporting of sensitive issues like femicide.
- 1 Foster collaboration between media, civil society, and government agencies to address root causes and improve data collection on femicide.

This report serves as a critical resource for understanding the media's role in combating femicide and underscores the urgency of collective action to protect women's rights and lives in Kenya.