

Summary Report

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

1 Published by the Media Council of Kenya, Research Planning and Strategy Department.*

This report examines media coverage of femicide in Kenya during January 2024, highlighting trends, ethical concerns, and the role of media in addressing gender-based violence. Femicide, defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender, has seen a significant rise in Kenya, with over 500 cases reported between 2016 and 2023. The report analyzes media adherence to ethical standards, legal frameworks, and the broader societal implications of femicide.

Key Findings:

1 . ****Rising Femicide Cases****:

- 1 January 2024 saw a surge in femicide cases, including high-profile murders of Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni.
- 1 Data from OdipoDev.com reveals patterns in intimate partner and stranger killings, 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****:

- 1 The media played a critical role in setting the agenda, with sustained coverage of femicide cases across TV, radio, print, and digital platforms.
- 1 Broadcast media hosted panel discussions featuring experts, activists, and religious leaders, amplifying calls for action.
- 1 However, some outlets, including Anguo FM, Taifa Leo, The Star, and Kiss FM, were criticized for sensational, inaccurate, and insensitive reporting, including victim-blaming and graphic details.

3. ****Legal and Ethical Analysis****:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution and international conventions, such as CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, provide a robust legal framework to address gender-based violence.
- 1 Despite this, gaps in enforcement and preventive measures persist, with slow investigations and limited accountability for perpetrators.

- 1 The Media Council emphasized the need for adherence to the Code of Conduct for Journalism, particularly in reporting sensitive issues like femicide.

4. ****Public and Institutional Response****:

- 1 Civil society organizations, including FIDA Kenya and Usikimye, condemned the rise in femicide and called for government action.
- 1 Women parliamentarians urged the declaration of femicide as a national disaster.
- 1 The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife and Airbnb responded to security concerns in short-term rental accommodations following the murders.

5. ****Digital Media Trends****:

- 1 Hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen trended on social media, reflecting public outrage and calls for justice.
- 1 Online platforms also highlighted patriarchal attitudes and the harassment of women advocating for gender equality.

Conclusion:

The media's coverage of femicide in January 2024 was largely consistent and informative, providing a platform for public discourse and expert analysis. However, ethical lapses in reporting, such as sensationalism and insensitivity, undermined efforts to address the issue. The report calls for improved adherence to journalistic ethics, sustained advocacy, and stronger government action to combat femicide and protect women's rights.

Recommendations:

- 1 Media outlets should prioritize accuracy, sensitivity, and ethical reporting in covering femicide.
- 1 Government agencies must expedite investigations and enforce laws to hold perpetrators accountable.
- 1 Stakeholders, including civil society and the media, should collaborate to address systemic issues contributing to gender-based violence.

This report underscores the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach to end femicide and ensure the safety and dignity of women in Kenya.