

Summary Report

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

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Key Findings:

1 . **Femicide Context in Kenya**:

- 1 Femicide, defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender, has surged in Kenya, with 150 cases reported in 2023 and at least 10 in January 2024 alone.
- 1 Nairobi, Kiambu, and Nakuru counties recorded the highest incidents, though underreporting in other regions skews data.
- 1 Patriarchal norms, gender inequality, and harmful social practices contribute to the prevalence of femicide.

2. **Media Coverage Analysis**:

- 1 ****Broadcast Media****: Coverage of high-profile cases like Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni dominated TV and radio, with discussions on femicide, expert panels, and calls for justice. However, some outlets, like Anguo FM and Kiss FM, were criticized for insensitive and sensational reporting.
- 1 ****Print Media****: Outlets like *Taifa Leo* and *The Star* published explicit, gory details, breaching ethical guidelines on sensitivity and grief intrusion.
- 1 ****Digital Media****: Hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen trended, amplifying public discourse and advocacy efforts.

3. **Legal and Ethical Framework**:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution and laws, including the Sexual Offences Act and international treaties like CEDAW, provide robust protections against gender-based violence. However, enforcement remains weak, with slow investigations and limited accountability for perpetrators.
- 1 Media ethics, as outlined in the Code of Conduct for Kenyan Journalists, emphasize accuracy, sensitivity, and respect for victims. While many outlets adhered to these standards, some fell short, prompting calls for stricter regulatory oversight.

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

- 1 Civil society organizations, women's groups, and religious leaders condemned femicide, urging the government to declare it a national disaster.
- 1 The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife introduced measures to regulate short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) following femicide cases linked to such accommodations.

5. ****Challenges in Reporting****:

- 1 Sensationalism, victim-blaming, and inaccurate reporting were noted in some media outlets, undermining ethical journalism.
- 1 Limited expert engagement and short-lived discussions failed to address the systemic root causes of femicide.

Conclusion**:

The media played a pivotal role in raising awareness and setting the agenda on femicide, but ethical lapses highlighted the need for improved adherence to professional standards. Sustained, sensitive, and accurate reporting, coupled with robust legal and institutional action, is essential to combat femicide effectively.

Recommendations**:

- 1 Strengthen enforcement of media ethics to prevent sensationalism and insensitivity.
- 1 Enhance collaboration between media, civil society, and government to address systemic issues driving femicide.
- 1 Improve data collection and reporting mechanisms to ensure comprehensive coverage of femicide cases nationwide.
- 1 This report underscores the media's critical role in combating femicide while calling for greater accountability and ethical responsibility in reporting.*