

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, ethical concerns, and the role of the media in addressing gender-based violence. Femicide, defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender, has seen a troubling rise in Kenya, with over 500 cases reported 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 such as those of Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni.
- 1 Data from OdipoDev.com reveals recurring patterns, with stabbing, hacking, and strangulation as common methods. Intimate partner violence and stranger killings are prevalent, with firearms often used by perpetrators linked to law enforcement.

2. **Media Coverage**:

- 1 The media played a pivotal role in agenda-setting, sustaining public interest, and amplifying calls for action. Broadcast and digital platforms hosted panel discussions, engaged experts, and condemned the killings.
- 1 However, some outlets, including Anguo FM, Taifa Leo, The Star, and Kiss FM, were criticized for sensational, inaccurate, and insensitive reporting, often victim-blaming or violating ethical guidelines.

3. **Legal and Ethical Framework**:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution and international conventions, such as CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, provide a robust legal framework to combat gender-based violence. However, gaps in enforcement and preventive measures persist.
- 1 The Media Council Act (2013) and the Code of Conduct for Kenyan Journalists emphasize accuracy, sensitivity, and respect for victims' dignity, but violations were noted in coverage.

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

- 1 Civil society organizations, activists, and religious leaders condemned the killings and called for systemic change. The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) were vocal in demanding justice and policy reforms.
- 1 The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife and the Ministry of Interior initiated measures to regulate short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) following security concerns raised by femicide cases.

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

- 1 Sensationalism and lack of sensitivity were prevalent, with some media outlets focusing on gory details and victim-blaming narratives.
- 1 Ethical breaches included intrusion into grief, inaccurate reporting, and failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Journalists.

6. ****Digital Media and Advocacy****:

- 1 Social media campaigns, including hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen, amplified calls for justice and highlighted patriarchal attitudes contributing to gender-based violence.

Conclusion:

The media's role in reporting femicide was both impactful and contentious. While it succeeded in raising awareness and fostering public debate, ethical lapses undermined its credibility. The report calls for stricter adherence to journalistic ethics, sustained advocacy, and collaborative efforts among media, government, and civil society to address the systemic issues driving femicide in Kenya.

Recommendations:

- 1 Strengthen enforcement of media ethics and the Code of Conduct.
- 1 Enhance data collection and reporting on femicide to inform policy and interventions.
- 1 Foster partnerships between media, law enforcement, and advocacy groups to ensure justice for victims and prevent future cases.

This analysis serves as a guide for improving media coverage and addressing the root causes of femicide in Kenya.