

Summary Report

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

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Executive Summary

This report examines media coverage of femicide in Kenya during January 2024, highlighting trends, ethical considerations, 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 concerning rise in Kenya, with 150 cases reported in 2023 and at least 10 cases in January 2024 alone. The media has played a critical role in raising awareness, setting the agenda, and pressuring authorities to act. However, instances of sensationalism, victim-blaming, and ethical breaches were noted, underscoring the need for improved adherence to journalistic standards.

Key Findings

1 . **Media Coverage and Agenda Setting**:

- 1 Media outlets extensively covered high-profile cases, such as the murders of Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni, framing them as femicide and sparking national discourse.
- 1 Broadcast and print media hosted panel discussions with experts, activists, and religious leaders to address root causes and advocate for systemic change.

2. **Ethical Concerns**:

- 1 Some outlets, including Anguo FM, Taifa Leo, and Kiss FM, were criticized for insensitive, sensational, and victim-blaming reporting.
- 1 Violations of the Code of Conduct for Kenyan Journalists included intrusion into grief, inaccurate reporting, and the use of gory details.

3. **Legal and Institutional Context**:

- 1 Kenya's legal framework, including the Constitution, Sexual Offences Act, and international conventions like CEDAW, provides robust protections against gender-based violence. However, gaps in enforcement and preventive measures persist.

- 1 Institutions such as FIDA Kenya, the National Gender and Equality Commission, and civil society organizations have condemned femicide and called for urgent action.

4. ****Regional and Global Trends****:

- 1 Africa recorded the highest number of intimate partner and family-related femicides globally in 2022, with Kenya's patriarchal society exacerbating the issue.
- 1 Data from OdipoDev.com revealed over 500 femicide cases in Kenya between 2016 and 2023, with stabbing, hacking, and strangulation as common methods.

5. ****Digital Media and Public Engagement****:

- 1 Hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen trended on social media, amplifying calls for justice and highlighting systemic gender inequality.

Recommendations

- 1 ****Media****: Adhere to ethical reporting standards, avoid sensationalism, and provide balanced, sensitive coverage of femicide cases.
- 1 ****Government****: Strengthen enforcement of existing laws, expedite investigations, and implement preventive measures to address femicide.
- 1 ****Civil Society****: Continue advocacy efforts, support victims, and collaborate with media to sustain public awareness and pressure for change.

Conclusion

While the media has been instrumental in highlighting femicide and driving public discourse, ethical lapses and systemic challenges remain. A coordinated effort involving media, government, and civil society is essential to combat femicide and protect women's rights in Kenya.

References

- 1 UN Women, UNODC, and other international and domestic legal frameworks.
- 1 Media Council of Kenya's Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism.
- 1 Reports from FIDA Kenya, OdipoDev.com, and other stakeholders.

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