

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 indicates 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 skews data.

2. **Media Coverage**:

- 1 The media played a critical role in agenda-setting, sustaining public discourse, and pressuring authorities to act.
- 1 Broadcast and print media extensively covered femicide, with panel discussions featuring experts from organizations like FIDA Kenya and the National Gender and Equality Commission.
- 1 However, some outlets (e.g., Anguo FM, Taifa Leo, Kiss FM) were criticized for sensationalism, victim-blaming, and insensitive reporting.

3. **Legal and Ethical Analysis**:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution and international conventions (e.g., CEDAW, Maputo Protocol) provide robust legal protections against gender-based violence.
- 1 Despite this, gaps in enforcement and slow legal processes hinder justice for victims.

- 1 The Media Council emphasized the need for adherence to the Code of Conduct for Journalism, particularly regarding sensitivity, accuracy, and avoiding sensationalism.

4. ****Content Analysis****:

- 1 Broadcast media provided platforms for human rights groups, activists, and religious leaders to condemn femicide and advocate for systemic change.
- 1 Print and digital media often used sensational headlines, breaching ethical guidelines on intrusion into grief and shock.
- 1 Social media campaigns like #EndFemicideKE and #TotalShutdownKE amplified calls for justice and gender equality.

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

- 1 Organizations like FIDA Kenya and the Zamara Foundation highlighted systemic issues, including underreporting and victim shaming.
- 1 The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife initiated measures to regulate short-term rental accommodations (e.g., Airbnb) following security concerns raised by femicide cases.

Conclusion:

The media's role in reporting femicide was pivotal in raising awareness and driving public discourse. While most outlets adhered to ethical standards, some fell short, necessitating stricter oversight. The report calls for sustained media engagement, improved legal enforcement, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to combat femicide and gender-based violence in Kenya.

Recommendations:

- 1 Strengthen media adherence to ethical reporting standards.
- 1 Enhance legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to address femicide.
- 1 Foster collaboration between media, civil society, and government to address root causes of gender-based violence.
- 1 Promote public awareness campaigns to challenge harmful cultural norms and stereotypes.

This report underscores the urgent need for systemic change to protect women's rights and ensure justice for victims of femicide.