

# Summary Report

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

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

### Key Findings:

#### 1 . \*\*Femicide Context in Kenya\*\*:

- 1 Femicide, the intentional killing of women based on gender, has risen sharply, with 150 cases in 2023 and at least 10 in January 2024.
- 1 Nairobi, Kiambu, and Nakuru counties reported the highest incidents, though underreporting in other regions distorts data.
- 1 Contributing factors include patriarchal norms, gender inequality, and harmful social practices.

#### 2. \*\*Media Coverage Analysis\*\*:

- 1 \*\*Broadcast Media\*\*: High-profile cases like Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni dominated TV and radio, featuring expert panels and calls for justice. However, outlets like Anguo FM and Kiss FM faced criticism for sensationalism.
- 1 \*\*Print Media\*\*: Publications such as \*Taifa Leo\* and \*The Star\* breached ethical guidelines by publishing explicit, gory details.
- 1 \*\*Digital Media\*\*: Hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #SilencingWomen amplified public discourse and advocacy efforts.

#### 3. \*\*Legal and Ethical Framework\*\*:

- 1 Kenya's Constitution, the Sexual Offences Act, and international treaties like CEDAW provide strong protections against gender-based violence, but enforcement is weak, with slow investigations and limited accountability.
- 1 Media ethics, as per the Code of Conduct for Kenyan Journalists, emphasize accuracy and sensitivity. While many outlets adhered, some fell short, prompting calls for stricter oversight.

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

- 1 Civil society, 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 undermined ethical journalism.
- 1 Limited expert engagement and short-lived discussions failed to address systemic root causes.

## **Conclusion\*\*:**

The media played a critical role in raising awareness of femicide but faced ethical lapses, highlighting the need for improved adherence to professional standards. Sustained, sensitive, and accurate reporting, alongside robust legal and institutional action, is essential to combat femicide effectively.

## **Recommendations\*\*:**

- 1 . Strengthen enforcement of media ethics to prevent sensationalism and insensitivity.
2. Enhance collaboration between media, civil society, and government to address systemic issues.
3. Improve data collection and reporting mechanisms for comprehensive coverage of femicide cases nationwide.

This report underscores the media's pivotal role in combating femicide while advocating for greater accountability and ethical responsibility in reporting.