

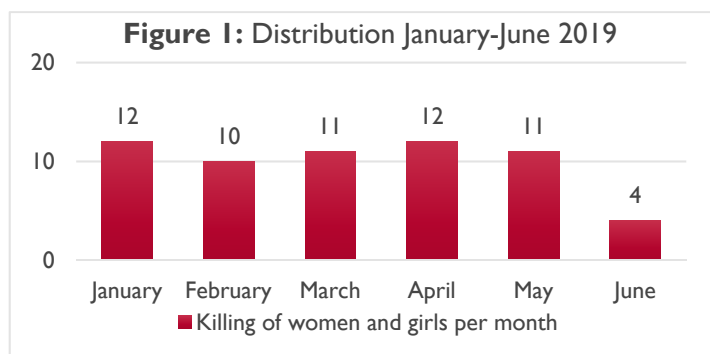


## #CallItFemicide

# Understanding gender-related killings of women and girls in Canada 2019 Mid-Year Update

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of the continuing efforts of the *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability* (CFOJA) to collect and disseminate knowledge on femicide in Canada. It is based on available information from media reports. Given these are recent incidents and investigations are ongoing, these are preliminary findings only. Identifying whether these killings are ‘femicide’ – women killed *because* they are women – is an ongoing process and those incidents that involve gender-based motives/indicators will be reported on when further information becomes available. [For more detailed discussion, see CFOJA inaugural 2018 report: <https://femicideincanada.ca/callitfemicide.pdf> ]

### ❖ When have the killings of women and girls occurred?



During the first six months of 2019, 60 women/girls have been killed by violence in 58 incidents. The number of women/girls killed each month remained steady from January to May, ranging from 10-12 killings per month. June saw significantly fewer killings, with four killings documented. Nine cases remain unsolved, with no perpetrator identified. In the remaining 49 cases, there were 53 identified accused.

### ❖ Where have incidents occurred?

The greatest proportion of women and girls (35%) were killed in Ontario, Canada’s most populous province. However, adjusting for Ontario’s female representation in the Canadian population, the rate of killings (0.29 per 100,000 women/girls) is among the lowest for those provinces in which killings were documented. The highest rate of killings of women and girls was in Alberta (0.65 per 100,000 women/girls). In contrast, Quebec had the lowest rate (0.17 per 100,000 women/girls). No killings of women and girls were documented for the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, or the Yukon. [See *infographic for further information on provincial rates.*]

### ❖ Who are the victims?

Age	Indigenous Women/Girls
Victim ages ranged from five months to 83 years old, with an average age of 43 years. Most victims were 35 to 44 years old, followed by those 25 to 34 years. One in five victims were 65 years and older – 6 women were aged 65 to 74 and 5 women were 75 and older.	Indigenous women and girls were victims in 9 cases and it is believed victims were Indigenous in 2 other cases. As such, Indigenous victims represent 15 percent of the total number of victims – <b>3 times</b> their representation in population (about 5%).



❖ **Who are the accused?**

Age	Gender
The age of the primary accused ranged from 15 to 90 years old. Like victims, the largest group of accused were aged 35 to 44 years (33%) followed by 65 years and older (20%).	Focusing on the primary accused only in each incident, males comprised the majority of accused (85%).

❖ **Types of femicide**

Focusing on the 51 victims in the 49 cases in which an accused was identified, the largest group of women were killed by a current or former male partner. Almost 40 percent of all victims were killed within the context of intimate partner relationships which is the most commonly-recognized form of gender-related killing worldwide (UNODC 2018), often referred to as ‘intimate femicide’. The next largest group of victims were killed by other family members (29%), including parents and children. Of the victims killed by a family member, 10 percent were the biological child of the accused (4 male and 1 female accused). These findings are consistent with international studies which demonstrate that many victims of femicide are killed by current or former male partners, but a large proportion are also killed by fathers, brothers, and other family members – also because of the victim’s role and status as women or girls (UNODC 2018:11).

❖ **Location: urban versus rural**

Almost two-thirds (64%) of all victims were killed in an urban area (populations of 50,000 or more), followed by rural areas with a population of 9,999 residents or less (22%), and the remaining 14 percent were killed in a small town (e.g., 10,000 to 49,999). Recent Statistics Canada figures for homicide generally show increasing rates in rural compared to urban areas driven, in part, by an increase in firearm-related homicide (Beattie et al. 2018). Given about 16 percent of residents in Canada live in rural regions, and 22 percent of the victims in 2019 were killed in rural areas, rurality as a risk factor for femicide will continue to be examined in more detail in subsequent reports.

❖ **Incident characteristics**

For those cases in which information was available (53%), the largest proportion of women and girls were killed by stabbing (34%), followed by shooting (31%).

Of the 49 cases where an accused has been identified, the largest proportion of victims were killed in the home they shared with the accused (33%), followed by victims killed in their own home (16%) or the home of the accused (6%). Consistent with international findings which demonstrate that the home appears to be the most dangerous place for a woman (UNDOC 2018), preliminary findings show that women and girls in Canada are also at the greatest risk of being killed in their own homes.





## ❖ What's Next?

- Information is still pending in many cases given their recent occurrence. In an ongoing effort to help Canada comply with international recommendations for national femicide watches/observatories in every country (Hemblade et al. 2017), the CFOJA will continue to monitor, update, and record the killings of women and girls as more information about cases becomes available and document new cases as they occur.
- Since the publication of *The Latin American Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-Related Killings of Women (Femicide/Feminicide)*, there has been an increasing effort to delineate, through characteristics and indicators, how femicides can be distinguished from female homicides more generally (Sarmiento et al. 2014).
- The CFOJA will begin to explore gender-based motives/indicators in cases of femicide by focusing on incidents that occur in Canada, contributing more comprehensive knowledge on how these indicators can aid in the classification of femicide in Canada and abroad.

The CFOJA is proud to have been identified as a 'good practice' in the Canada Report from the United Nations *Special Rapporteur for Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences* (see Mission to Canada report at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx>).

## References

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This fact sheet was created by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA) in conjunction with the research team at the Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence ([www.violenceresearch.ca](http://www.violenceresearch.ca)), University of Guelph, and in consultation with the CFOJA Expert Advisory Panel <https://femicideincanada.ca/home/who>

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For more information about this project and for additional resources, visit  
<http://www.femicideincanada.ca>

