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**RE: INFORMATION ON KENYA - THE FEMICIDE WATCH INITIATIVE**

Dear Special Rapporteur Simonovic,

We respectfully submit this brief to the office of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to promote evidence-based policies and strategies for the prevention of femicide, through the collection of comparable data on femicide rates at the national, regional and global level. This brief is made pursuant to the **Call for submissions “Taking stock of the Femicide Watch Initiative.”**

Equality Now bases this submission on our work and input from other like minded civil society organizations namely: Young Women’s Leadership Institute, Akili dada and Counting Dead Women.

We are writing to share concerns, gaps, challenges and good practices in addressing femicide in Kenya. This brief details our concerns regarding femicide in Kenya in general and more specifically responding to the guiding questions in the call for submissions.

**Equality Now** is an international human rights organization with ECOSOC status working to protect and promote the rights of women and girls worldwide since 1992, including through our membership network of individuals and organizations in over 190 countries.

Founded in 1999, **Young Women’s Leadership Institute** is a feminist centre of excellence for nurturing the leadership of adolescent girls and young feminists. YWLI provides spaces and opportunities for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to engage in setting their own agenda and in determining how the world around them should change.

**Counting Dead Women (CDW)** is a facebook page created by activist women to count the reported number of Kenyan girls and women who have been killed through violence. This was a response to the increased cases of Femicide in the country. CDW Kenya observes the deaths of women and girls in Kenya. CDW gives information on the arrests conducted after a femicide-related death.

**Akili Dada** is an international award-winning leadership incubator with a mission to nurture transformative leadership in girls and young women from underserved backgrounds to meet the urgent need for more African women in leadership.

### **Selected reported cases of femicide in Kenya:**

1. Sheila Njeri Murage, probably in her late twenties or early thirties and a mother of one, was found sexually assaulted and murdered on Saturday the 25th of July, 2020. Sheila was found with blood oozing out of her nose and dark marks on her face, from the autopsy she was hit severally with a blunt object on the head. Her lifeless body had been dumped on the flower bed of Santonia Courts in Kilimani where she had attended a house party (note this is the same apartment building where Careen Chepchumba was found murdered in 2012 after attending a party). Three suspects were arrested and released on 100,000 kes bond or 50,000 kes cash bail each.
2. Mercy Njeri, 23 years old from Njoro, was brutally murdered by her husband on the 13th of October 2020. He is said to have slit her throat with a sharp object then proceeded to burn her head, hands, and feet. He was on the run for four days and was captured by DCI and arrested on the 17th of October 2020.
3. 26-year-old Celestine Nduku, a mother of two, was stabbed to death on the 28th of March 2021. Her lifeless body was discovered in a pool of blood in her house in Kambi Ya Juu area in Isiolo County. Her husband who was on the run is the main suspect for her death and is in police custody.
4. 23-year-old Velvine Nungari was a student and a waitress who died on the 9th of March 2021 following complications of a sexual assault. Velvine was receiving treatment at Kenyatta University Hospital for spinal injuries and cervical fractures after she was brutally assaulted and raped by a man on the 23rd of February. The suspect was arrested for the rape then released on bond. Following her death, he was re-arrested and in police custody following investigations.
5. On the 8th of February 2021, an unnamed 28-year-old woman and her two children (genders not given, aged 5 and 9 years) were hacked to death by her husband. The heinous crime happened in their family home in Kiamukuyu Mbeere County. An

unnamed 40-year-old woman was strangled to death by her 45-year old boyfriend, a waiter. The woman is suspected to have died on the 18th of April and the boyfriend continued living his life as normal for the next three days, before neighbors called the police because of the smell emanating from the house. Her lifeless body was moved to the morgue on the 21st of April. The boyfriend has confessed to the murder saying that she was going to leave him for another man. He has been arrested by DCI and will be arraigned in court.

6. On Monday 13th May, 2020, Constable Pauline Wangari became a victim, stabbed to death by a man she had met online, she had met the man on a social media platform.
7. On 6th May, 2020 Ann Kanario was found dead at her house near the university she was attending. Police suspect she was murdered by her boyfriend who was found hanging dead in the house.
8. Yet another young woman, Ivy Wangechi, was hacked to death with a machete on 9th April 2020 by her former boyfriend, who later claimed that unrequited love had led to him committing the heinous crime.
9. The case of Milicent Odira was closed. Mildred was found in the city mortuary after taking a taxi in the wee hours of the morning when she fell sick on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Feb 2019. The police were unable to come up with conclusive evidence that showed who murdered her. The case was closed because of a lack of evidence.
10. 45-year-old Emmy Chepkoech Mitey, a Deputy Teacher at Cheptalal Primary School and a mother of seven children, was doused in petrol and set on fire by her husband of several years. She had a quarrel with her husband weeks earlier and had returned to her parent's home. Her husband, later followed her there to commit the murder. She died in Tenwek hospital at the High Dependency Unit on the 7th of October in 2020.
11. Jennifer Wambua, a communication expert at the National Land Commission was found strangled to death on Monday the 15th of March 2021 after she went missing the previous Friday. Her lifeless body was discovered at the city mortuary after it was picked up by police in a thicket in Ngong Forest. Jennifer was a state witness following a corruption case she was testifying against. The case is under investigation and no arrests have been made yet.
12. 34-year-old Charity Cheboi Kiprop, a registration officer at National Registration Bureau was suffocated to death together with her 8-year-old son in Jogoo Road on the 23rd of February 2021. The double murder is suspected to have been committed by her college boyfriend who a few hours later after committing the murders committed suicide.
13. 76-year-old, Elizabeth Waisiko Rioba's grandson struck her with a cooking stick on the head. This happened on the 29th of January 2021 in Migori County. She succumbed to

the injuries caused by the blow. The perpetrator was on the 24th of February 2021 sentenced to 50 years in prison after pleading guilty to the murder.

14. <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/kiambu/kiambu-man-confesses-to-grisly-murder-of-girlfriend-3367446>

These are only a few cases of women who have been reported killed at the hands of male intimate partners and other men. According to [Counting Dead Women Kenya](#), 46 women were victims of femicide between January 1st and 2nd May in 2020. In 2021, the numbers are still soaring at [\(1\) Counting Dead Women- Kenya | Facebook](#). Here, no official statistics from the Government of Kenya. Counting Dead Women is a new initiative by women activists in Kenya established in 2020 as a response to the increase in cases of Femicide in the country.

**1. On the existence, or progress in the creation, of a national femicide watch and/or femicide observatory and/or observatory on violence against women with a femicide watch role; observatories at Ombudspersons' office or Equality Bodies; academic institutions and/or NGOs, or any plans to create one.**

Currently, Kenya does not have a national observatory on femicide cases in Kenya. However, civil society organizations and other private sector individuals undertake the following interventions:

- Recording the deaths of women and girls in Kenya;
- Where possible, giving information between the perpetrator and victim;
- Giving information on the arrests conducted after a femicide related death;
- Providing analysis and research that shows the lack of protection in the system that caused the death of the woman or girl.

**2. On other measures including research and studies undertaken to analyse femicide or gender related killings of women and girls, or homicides of women by intimate partners or family members and other femicides. If available, please share a copy of such studies.**

1. <https://www.wagggg.org/ar/blog/femicide-media-sensationalism-and-victim-blaming-kenya/>
2. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2020/0108/Numbers-don-t-lie-The-team-Counting-Dead-Women-in-Kenya>

3. [https://home.creaw.org/2019/04/12/statement-on-the-increasing-cases-of-femicide-in-kenya/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=statement-on-the-increasing-cases-of-femicide-in-kenya](https://home.creaw.org/2019/04/12/statement-on-the-increasing-cases-of-femicide-in-kenya/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=statement-on-the-increasing-cases-of-femicide-in-kenya)
4. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/109404>

**3. On the results of analysis of femicide cases, including the review of previous court cases and recommendations and actions undertaken in this respect.**

In the cases reported in the media cases below have been tried or closed:

- The case of Milicent Odira was closed. Mildred was found in the city mortuary after taking a taxi in the wee hours of the morning when she fell sick on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Feb 2019. The police were unable to come up with conclusive evidence that showed who murdered her. The case was closed because of a lack of evidence;
- 76-year-old Elizabeth Wasiko Rioba was killed by her grandson Samwel Chacha Matiko. Samwel has been sentenced to 50-years in prison after pleading guilty to killing his grandmother;
- Sheila Njeri Murage, probably in her late twenties or early thirties and a mother of one. Was found sexually assaulted and murdered on Saturday the 25th of July. Sheila was found with blood oozing out of her nose and dark marks on her face, from the autopsy she was hit severally with a blunt object on the head. Her lifeless body had been dumped on the flower bed of Santonia Courts in Kilimani where she had attended a house party (note this is the same apartment building where Careen Chepchumba was found murdered in 2012 after attending a party). Three suspects; Shem Lwanga Mangula, Christine Awour Chepkoech, and Claire Chepkoech Ng'eno were arrested and released on 100,000 kes bond or 50,000 kes cash bail each.

**4. On concrete measures taken to improve support to victims of violence and to prevent femicide, (risk assessment, efficiency of protection orders), in connection with the information gathered via femicide watches or observatories.**

**These are the measures that the Government of Kenya has taken so far:**

- Shelters and safe houses have been named under the essential services and are to provide services round the clock;
- GBV free toll numbers are available for assistance.

Studies in Kenya and around the world on violence against women show the risks that women who face violence are exposed to when the perpetrators are not apprehended or tried. One of these risks being femicide. The government protection system is flawed and women who are facing violence are not protected. This is seen from the moment a woman who has been violated enters a police station to report a case and it is not taken seriously. Matters of sexual and gender based violence in the country are partly erroneously regarded as family matters by some citizens and should be solved as such. However, for women and girls to be protected it would mean that the government should intervene; these are some of the measures that the government can consider:

- Proper budgetary allocation to curb violence against women;
- Open proper shelters that are a one stop shop for women facing violence: a hospital, a recovery center, and a place where she can pick up her pieces;
- Policies that are against violence should not just be on paper; proper policy implementation is important;
- Conversations about violence should not only happen when femicide has occurred and the case is in the media. Conversations should be alive and ongoing;
- Communities should be made aware of the policies that protect women and girls/children and the punishment that will follow those who violate these laws;
- Communities and all those concerned should be made aware of how to dictate that one is being abused so that reporting is not only in the hands of the victim but becomes a collective effort;
- The social services docket in the country is underfunded and not properly managed. The system should be revamped to ensure that it caters for those it should be serving.

**5. On good practices and challenges in implementing an evidence-based response to the prevention of femicide.**

None

**6. On data, if available, on femicides or intimate-partner and family-related homicides of women and men in the past 3 years, including during the Covid-19 pandemic (indicating the time period e.g. since March 2020 to the end of December 2020) and its comparison with such data before the COVID-19 pandemic.**

There is no existing government of Kenya official segregated data on femicide, however civil society organizations and activists have been keeping statistics of Femicide cases reported in the media which are as follows according to Counting Dead Women Kenya:

- 2019 from the period of Jan - Dec; **108** women were reported killed through Femicide;
- In 2020 from the period of Jan - Dec; **39** women and girls were reported killed through Femicide;
- In 2021 from the period of Jan - 21st April 2021; **14** women and girls have been reported killed through Femicide.

There is a need for the government to start tracking cases of Femicide. This will give a clear picture of the problem and guide response interventions.