

STOP!
HELP!

LOVE

NAME: AIGREL WANJIKU
AGE: 19 YEARS OLD.
LOCATION: MWIRI

Aigrel Wanjiku, just 19, died out of fatal injuries, fall of a building. She was a victim of gender-based violence. Her body was found in a state of decomposition. Her body was found in a state of decomposition. Her body was found in a state of decomposition.

SHE DID NOT DIE BY ACCIDENT:

Mapping Femicide in Kenya (2025)

Credits

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She Did Not Die by Accident: Mapping Femicide in Kenya in Kenya

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU - African Union

CA - Communications Authority of Kenya

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CEC - County Executive Committee

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

GBV - Gender Based Violence

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

ICTA - Information and Communications Technology Authority of Kenya

KMET - Kisumu Medical and Education Trust

KNBS - Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

NGEC - National Gender and Equality Commission

NPS - National Police Service

ODPP - Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

PWD - Persons with Disabilities

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

WHO - World Health Organization

1. FOREWORD

Many of us treat femicide statistics as distant numbers. We convince ourselves that it could not happen to us, that it belongs to another social class, another neighbourhood, or that it feels more like a fictional film than a lived reality. In the daily cycle of news, femicide cases are often buried beneath other events. The women we lose become statistics, briefly mentioned and quickly forgotten.

In 2025, when I co created the MASKAN exhibition with my friend Njeri Migwi from Usikimye, what stayed with me most were the faces of the people who experienced the work. We were privileged to take MASKAN to Kisumu, Nakuru, Mombasa, and back to Nairobi. In every city, we witnessed silence, tears, discomfort, and recognition. It was difficult to watch people confront the weight of femicide so directly, yet it was also necessary. There was something powerful in creating a space where people could feel, reflect, and grieve together. We hope that the work shifted something in everyone who encountered it.

She Did Not Need to Die is the result of that journey. This report maps femicide in Kenya in 2025, documenting patterns, failures, and missed opportunities for prevention. The work was not without limitation. The absence of publicly released government femicide data after March 2025 forced us to widen the reporting period into 2024 to ensure continuity and context. That absence is itself telling.

This report is offered as both documentation and invitation. An invitation to read carefully, to reflect honestly, and to share these findings with friends, policymakers, and institutions that have the power to act. The recommendations outlined here are grounded in lived experience, community voices, and preventable loss.

We are deeply grateful to the communities and individuals who made this work possible, often at personal risk and emotional cost. Their courage reminds us that femicide is not inevitable. It is the result of choices and systems that can be changed.

We urge the government to release comprehensive femicide data and to formally recognise femicide as a crime. Naming matters. Data matters. Action matters. The women and girls whose lives were lost deserve nothing less.

Thayu Kilili

Managing Trustee, Creatives Garage and Maskan Curator



4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Femicide, the gender related killing of women and girls, emerged in 2025 as one of Kenya's most urgent and visible human rights crises. Despite increased public attention, advocacy, and government commitments, women continued to be killed in predictable and preventable circumstances, often after prolonged exposure to gender based violence, institutional neglect, and community silence.

This report documents and analyses femicide cases recorded in Kenya between January and December 2025. It draws on documented case reports, media coverage, civil society records, and extensive qualitative evidence gathered through the MASKAN multisensory installation and national city tour. Between January and March 2025 alone, at least 129 femicide cases were reported. Since March 2025, the Government of Kenya has not publicly released, updated or consolidated femicide statistics, creating a critical data gap that obscures the full scale of the crisis and weakens accountability. This figure therefore reflects only documented cases and strongly indicates significant nationwide underreporting.

The findings of this report confirm that femicide in Kenya in 2025 was systemic, patterned, and foreseeable. These killings were not isolated incidents nor spontaneous acts of violence. They were the culmination of sustained gender inequality, normalized

abuse, and repeated institutional failure.

4.2. Key Findings

Femicide in 2025 followed clear and recurring patterns. In the majority of documented cases, perpetrators were known to the victims, most often current or former intimate partners or close family members. Violence was rarely sudden. It escalated over time through emotional, physical, and economic abuse.

Warning signs were consistently present and ignored. Survivors had often reported abuse, expressed fear, or sought help from family members, community leaders, police, or local organizations. These signals were frequently dismissed, inadequately addressed, or redirected into informal settlement mechanisms that failed to protect victims.

Private spaces were the most lethal. Most femicide cases in 2025 occurred within homes, shared residences, or intimate settings. These are spaces assumed to offer safety, yet they proved to be the most dangerous for women.

Underreporting in 2025 was structural rather than accidental. Fear of retaliation, stigma, cultural pressure, economic dependency, and deep mistrust of the justice system prevented many survivors and

families from pursuing legal action. Across multiple cities, individuals declined to formally associate with anti femicide initiatives due to fear of being identified. This reveals a shrinking civic space around gender justice advocacy.

Traditional and informal justice mechanisms repeatedly undermined accountability. Out of court settlements, family negotiations, and cultural conflict resolution practices resulted in cases being withdrawn or weakened. This enabled perpetrators to evade justice and reinforced cycles of impunity.

Institutional responses in 2025 remained fragmented and inadequate. Law enforcement, judicial systems, healthcare services, and survivor protection infrastructure including safe houses and psychosocial support were under resourced, slow, and inconsistently implemented. Kenya continues to lack a standalone legal framework that recognises femicide as a distinct crime.

The social impact of femicide in 2025 was profound and lasting. Children were left without caregivers. Families endured prolonged trauma and economic strain. Communities absorbed violence as a normalized reality rather than an emergency requiring urgent intervention.

Femicide hotspots were widely known at community level. Survivors were routinely discouraged from pursuing justice. Patriarchal norms, economic strain, substance abuse, untreated trauma, and weak protection systems fueled cycles of violence. Youth were increasingly exposed to normalized misogyny, online grooming, and harmful narratives around entitlement and control. There was a clear public

demand for faster justice processes, stronger protection mechanisms, and meaningful policy reform.

Through the MASKAN exhibition and city tours in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa, communities across Kenya engaged directly with the realities of femicide in 2025. Dialogues, panels, and testimonies revealed consistent national patterns.

Femicide in Kenya in 2025 was not an anomaly. It was a predictable outcome of systemic failure. Each documented killing represents not only a life lost, but multiple missed opportunities to intervene, protect, and prevent.

This report calls for urgent and coordinated action within Kenya's legal, policy, and community frameworks. Recognising femicide, tracking it accurately, intervening early, and holding perpetrators accountable are essential steps toward ending the crisis.

Without decisive and sustained action, femicide will continue to claim lives quietly, repeatedly, and with devastating consequences for families, communities, and the nation.

5. INTRODUCTION

Femicide, the gender related killing of women and girls, represents one of the most urgent human rights and public safety crises in Kenya. In 2025, women continued to be killed in predictable and preventable circumstances, often after prolonged exposure to violence, threats, and institutional neglect.

Despite growing public attention, advocacy, and policy commitments, accountability and prevention remained weak. Survivors reported violence without protection, families pursued justice without support, and warning signs were repeatedly ignored. Visibility did not translate into action.

This report documents and analyses femicide in Kenya in 2025. Its purpose is to move beyond outrage toward evidence, accountability, and prevention. Drawing on documented cases, media reporting, civil society records, and qualitative evidence gathered through the MASKAN multisensory installation and county engagements, the report identifies patterns, institutional failures, and opportunities for reform.

The report focuses on femicide cases documented during 2025, a year marked by heightened public concern and escalating violence. Due to the absence of publicly released official femicide data after March 2025, the reporting period extends from January 2024

to December 2025 to provide continuity and context. The figures presented are conservative estimates based on publicly verifiable information. The analysis prioritises pattern recognition rather than absolute counts, recognising widespread underreporting and misclassification.

While national in scope, the report provides in depth analysis of Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa, where urban dynamics, reporting visibility, and documented case volumes reveal critical prevention and accountability gaps.

In early 2025, at least 129 femicide cases were reported between January and March alone, indicating an average of roughly one woman killed per day. Beyond March, the absence of publicly released government data raised serious concerns about transparency and accountability.

Independent media and civil society analysis confirmed that many femicide cases continued to be recorded as general homicide or domestic disputes, obscuring their gendered nature and limiting effective response. Public demand for action intensified through protests, petitions, and advocacy, including the collection of over one hundred thousand signatures calling for legal recognition of femicide as a distinct crime.

Despite these efforts, femicide persisted throughout the year. The gap between public commitment and lived reality remained wide. This report is situated within that gap, documenting what occurred in 2025 and what must change to prevent further loss of life.

6. DEFINING FEMICIDE

Femicide refers to the gender related killing of women and girls. It describes killings in which gender is a central factor, whether through power, control, entitlement, discrimination, or social norms that devalue the lives of women and girls.

Femicide is not simply homicide where the victim happens to be female. It is violence rooted in unequal gender relations and reinforced by systems that tolerate or excuse harm against women. It is the most extreme and irreversible form of gender based violence.

International human rights mechanisms, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, recognise femicide as a distinct human rights violation that requires specific recognition, prevention, and accountability. This framing emphasises that femicide is predictable and preventable when early warning signs are recognised and acted upon.

In Kenya, femicide often emerges at the intersection of intimate relationships, family power structures, economic dependency, cultural norms, and institutional failure. Naming femicide clearly is essential to understanding its causes and preventing its recurrence.

6.1. Forms of Femicide in the Kenyan Context

Femicide in Kenya manifests in several distinct but overlapping forms. These categories are not rigid, and many cases involve more than one element.

6.1.1. Intimate Partner Femicide

Intimate partner femicide refers to the killing of a woman or girl by a current or former husband, boyfriend, or romantic partner. This is the most commonly documented form of femicide in Kenya.

These killings are frequently preceded by a history of emotional abuse, physical violence, coercive control, stalking, or threats. Attempts by women to leave abusive relationships often increase risk. Many victims had previously sought help from family members, community leaders, or police, only for the violence to escalate.

In Kenyan society, intimate partner femicide is often minimised as a domestic issue or framed as a dispute that went too far. This framing obscures the gendered power dynamics at play and contributes to impunity.

6.1.2. Familial Femicide

Familial femicide involves killings committed by relatives, including parents, siblings, in laws, or extended family members.

In Kenya, this form of femicide is often linked to disputes over marriage, land, inheritance, pregnancy, disability, or perceived disobedience. Older women, young girls, and women with limited economic independence are particularly vulnerable.

Familial femicide is frequently concealed through family negotiations, silence, or out of court settlements that prioritise family reputation over justice. As a result, many cases remain undocumented or are withdrawn before reaching court.

6.1.3. Sexual Violence Related Killings

Sexual violence related femicide includes killings that occur during or after rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, defilement, or exploitation.

In Kenya, these killings disproportionately affect young women and girls. Alcohol use, digital grooming, transactional relationships, and unsafe public or private spaces often play a role. Victims are frequently blamed for their own deaths through narratives focused on behaviour, clothing, or presence in certain spaces.

Sexual violence related femicide exposes failures in child protection systems, sexual offences enforcement, survivor support, and community accountability.

6.1.4. Community Sanctioned or Moral Policing Killings

Community sanctioned femicide refers to killings justified or tolerated through social, cultural, or moral narratives. These may involve accusations of immorality, infidelity, witchcraft, defiance of gender roles, or perceived disrespect.

In some Kenyan communities, violence against women is excused or normalised through patriarchal beliefs that grant men authority over women's bodies and choices. Public shaming, mob violence, or family endorsed punishment can escalate into lethal outcomes.

These killings are often misclassified as mob justice or accidents, further obscuring their gendered nature.

6.2. Why Naming Femicide Matters

Failing to name femicide allows it to be absorbed into general crime statistics, domestic violence narratives, or cultural explanations that deny accountability. When femicide is not recognised as gendered violence, patterns are missed, warning signs are ignored, and prevention mechanisms remain weak.

In Kenya, the absence of femicide as a legally recognised category contributes to poor data collection, fragmented responses, and limited policy action. Naming femicide is therefore not symbolic. It is a necessary step toward prevention, protection, and justice.

Civil society efforts in 2025 demonstrate both public awareness and demand for legal recognition. Usikimye, a Kenyan organisation working on femicide documentation and survivor support, has collected

over one hundred thousand public signatures calling for Kenya to formally recognise femicide as a crime. The organisation is currently developing a policy brief to support legal and policy reform aimed at strengthening accountability, data collection, and prevention mechanisms.

Understanding femicide within Kenya's social, economic, and cultural context makes clear that these killings are not inevitable. They are the result of choices made by individuals and systems. With political will, legal recognition, and coordinated action, femicide can be prevented.

7. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

7.1 Research Design

This report adopts a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative case mapping with qualitative, community based evidence. The methodology was designed to document patterns of femicide in the absence of comprehensive official data, while centring survivor dignity, ethical responsibility, and contextual understanding.

The analysis prioritises pattern recognition over absolute counts. Given systemic underreporting and data gaps, the objective is not to claim completeness, but to identify recurring drivers, institutional failures, and prevention opportunities that emerge consistently across locations and sources.

7.2 Data Sources

This report is based on a review and synthesis of multiple evidence streams, including:

- National and regional media reports
- Police statements and press briefings

- Court records and ongoing trial coverage where accessible
- Documentation from civil society organisations and women's rights groups
- Publicly available statements from families and community advocates

Only cases with sufficient publicly verifiable information were included in quantitative analysis.

7.3 Timeframe

While this report focuses on femicide in 2025, the reporting period covers January 2024 to December 2025. This extended timeframe is necessary due to the absence of publicly released government femicide data from April 2025 to December 2025. Including cases from 2024 allows for continuity of analysis and helps contextualise patterns observed in early 2025. Some cases outside the primary focus period are referenced for contextual analysis only and are not included in aggregate figures for 2025.

7.4 The MASKAN Installation as a Data Collection Tool

MASKAN functioned not only as an advocacy intervention but also as a structured qualitative research space. The installation created conditions for disclosure, reflection, and dialogue that are rarely accessible through formal reporting systems.

Across all counties, MASKAN engaged over 5,000 participants through exhibitions in 2025. Several hundred additional attendees declined formal registration due to fear of association with anti femicide advocacy, reflecting documented civic risk and stigma surrounding public engagement on the issue.

An estimated 300 participants took part in facilitated discussions and panel dialogues following exhibition walkthroughs. These sessions involved survivors, family members, mental health professionals, civil society practitioners, local administrators, security actors, and community leaders.

A total of 316 written reflections were voluntarily shared by participants. These reflections were anonymised and used to identify recurring themes, institutional gaps, and social patterns rather than to measure prevalence.

Data generated through MASKAN included:

- Facilitated group discussions following exhibition walkthroughs
- Panel discussions with practitioners, survivors, mental health professionals, local administrators, and community leaders
- Written reflections and verbal feedback shared voluntarily by participants
- Observational notes recorded by facilitators on

audience responses, resistance, silencing, emotional reactions, and engagement patterns

While MASKAN participants do not constitute a statistically representative sample of the Kenyan population, the scale of engagement and consistency of themes across Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa strengthens the credibility and transferability of the findings. Recurrent narratives around fear of reporting, informal justice, institutional delays, social normalisation of violence, and civic withdrawal emerged across diverse demographic and geographic contexts.

7.5 Case Inclusion Criteria

A case was included in the dataset if it met the following criteria:

- The victim was a woman or girl
- The killing showed evidence of gender related motivation, relational context, or structural gender inequality
- Sufficient public information existed to confirm the incident through at least one credible source

Cases were excluded from quantitative totals where information was too limited to verify circumstances or where gender related factors could not reasonably be established.

7.6 Data Analysis Process

Quantitative data were analysed to identify:

- Geographic distribution and hotspots
- Relationship between victim and perpetrator
- Location and method of killing
- Presence of prior violence or warning signs
- Justice outcomes including arrests, investigations,

withdrawals, or inaction

Qualitative data were analysed thematically to surface:

- Social and cultural drivers of femicide
- Institutional response failures
- Survivor and community experiences of reporting and justice
- Patterns of silencing, fear, and stigma
- County specific dynamics and vulnerabilities

Findings were cross checked across counties and sources to identify national level patterns as well as local variations.

7.7 Ethical Framework and Safeguards

This report follows a strict ethical framework grounded in survivor safety, dignity, and the principle of doing no harm.

Key safeguards included:

- Voluntary participation in all MASKAN related dialogues
- Anonymisation of all survivor, family, and community testimonies
- No publication of identifying details that could expose individuals to harm
- Avoidance of graphic descriptions or sensationalised narratives
- Use of aggregate insights rather than individual case profiling where possible

Grounding and warm down exercises were incorporated during exhibitions to support emotional safety. No audio or visual recordings of personal testimonies were made without explicit consent.

7.8 Limitations

This report acknowledges several significant limitations such as:

- Underreporting, as many femicide cases never reach media or formal reporting channels

- Misclassification, with killings often recorded as general homicides or domestic disputes, masking gender related motives
- Incomplete records, due to the absence of a publicly centralised police and court data system
- Survivor silencing, driven by fear, stigma, economic dependency, and cultural pressure that discourage reporting of prior violence

As such, the figures presented should be understood as conservative estimates reflecting only known and documented cases.

7.9 Methodological Integrity

Despite these limitations, the strength of this methodology lies in triangulation. Patterns identified in this report appear consistently across independent data sources, geographic locations, and community narratives.

The convergence of quantitative trends and qualitative lived experience provides a credible and robust basis for the conclusions and recommendations presented.

7.10 Purpose of the Methodology

This methodology is not intended to replace official state data systems. It exists to fill a critical accountability gap, document preventable loss of life, and inform urgent policy, legal, and institutional reform. The absence of publicly released state data after March 2025 is itself a key finding. Until comprehensive national systems exist, civil society and community based documentation remain essential to visibility, prevention, and justice.



NAME: BERYL VERA ADRIAMU
AGE: 30 YEARS OLD.
LOCATION: MIGONI TOWN.



Beryl Vera Adriamu, a mother of three, installed her husband's tombstone at 7 A.M. The house was silent. Hours passed. The bedroom stayed locked. She was alone. She heard her body's body, of the man, her son, was still there. She was alone. She heard her son's body, of the man, her son, was still there. This was not the body that left before, broken, raped at the time we were.

Beryl should be alone.

NAME: HELEN WAMBUI
AGE: 19 YEARS OLD.
LOCATION: KIUMU, KIAMBU.



Belen went missing on March 2010, not in a single errand to the local shopping center. She never returned. Like Rosemary, her neighbor and friend. Helen was found days later, raped, dead, and had turned in a rather placidian.

The man behind both murders was a drifter. It was Sam Kiamu, their neighbor. The man who helped dig their graves. The man who stood beside their coffins, smiling with the flowers in his hands.

He used Rosemary's phone. Draped Helen's in a pit latrine and still visited at their mothers. Premium is not a distant memory. It was familiar home. Just was alone. The same two women. Gone. Just like that.

8. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

This section presents an analysis of documented femicide cases in Kenya in 2025. Due to the absence of publicly released government statistics from April to December 2025, the data presented here reflects cases documented through media reports, civil society records, and community based evidence collected through the MASKAN process. These figures represent a minimum baseline rather than the full scope of femicide in the country.

8.1 Total Documented Femicide Cases in 2025

Between January and December 2025, a total of at least 220 femicide cases were documented. Of these, 129 cases occurred between January and March 2025, the last period for which partial official data and consolidated reporting were available. The remaining cases were documented through non government sources between April and December 2025.

Period	Documented Cases
January to March 2025	129
April to December 2025	91
Total documented cases 2025	220

8.2 Geographic Distribution

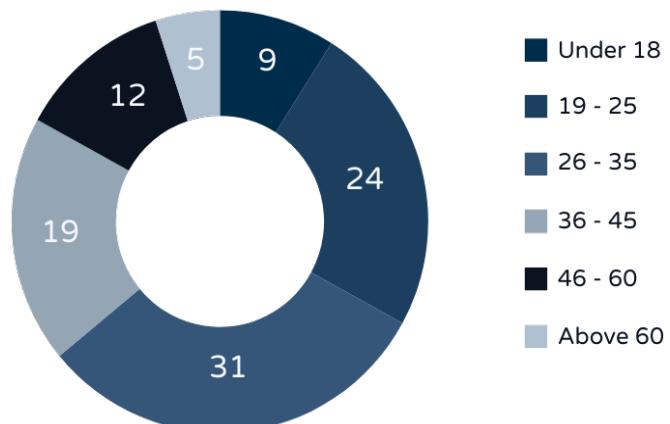
Femicide cases were documented across both urban and rural counties, with higher visibility in areas with stronger media presence and civil society monitoring.

County or Region	Approximate Cases
Nairobi	42
Kiambu	18
Nakuru	16
Kisumu	15
Mombasa	21
Rift Valley	38
Western Kenya	24
Coast	19
Other counties combined	27

Femicide was present in every region of the country. Rural cases remain significantly underrepresented due to limited reporting and reliance on informal justice mechanisms.

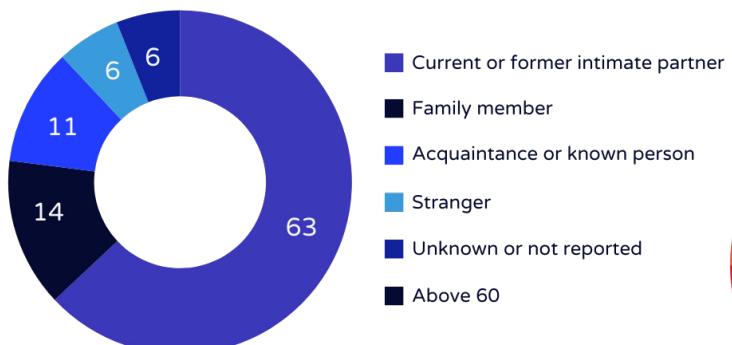
8.3 Age of Victims

Victims ranged in age from 15 to 74 years. The majority were young and economically active women.



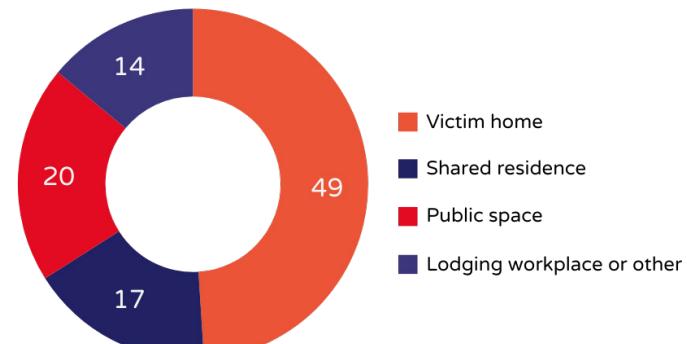
8.4 Relationship Between Victim and Perpetrator

In cases where the relationship was known, perpetrators were overwhelmingly known to the victim.



8.5 Location of Killings

Over two thirds of femicides occurred in private spaces, reinforcing the reality that the home is often the most dangerous place for women.



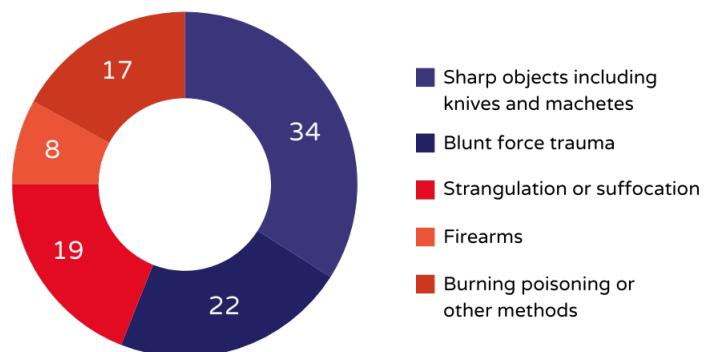
8.6 Prior Violence and Warning Signs

In approximately 41 percent of documented cases, there was evidence of prior violence or warning signs, including previous assaults, threats, stalking, or reported abuse.

This figure is likely understated due to silencing, fear of reporting, and incomplete documentation.

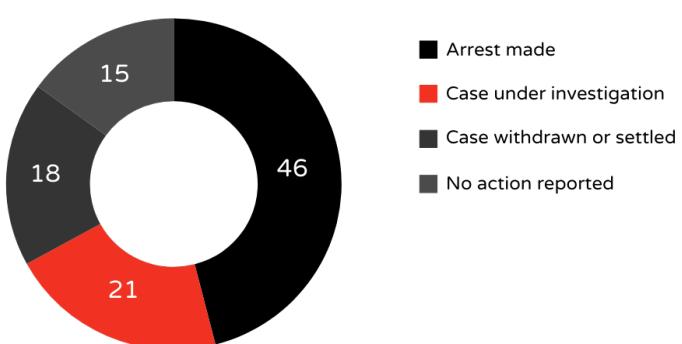
8.7 Methods Used

The prevalence of low technology weapons highlights the importance of early intervention rather than weapon control alone.



8.8 Reporting and Justice Outcomes

Out of court settlements and case withdrawals were most common in rural and peri urban settings, particularly where family or community pressure was present.



8.9 Key Statistical Insights

The data from 2025 reveals that femicide in Kenya is predictable, patterned, and preventable. The majority of victims knew their killers. Warning signs were present in many cases. Institutional intervention frequently failed to prevent escalation.

The absence of comprehensive government data after March 2025 significantly limits national accountability and obscures the true scale of the crisis. Civil society documentation remains the primary source of visibility.

9. PATTERNS AND TRENDS

The statistical overview of femicide in Kenya in 2025 reveals consistent and recurring patterns. These patterns demonstrate that femicide is not random or impulsive violence. It is the predictable outcome of escalating abuse, social tolerance of harm against women, and institutional failure to intervene in time.

9.1 Femicide as the Final Stage of Escalating Violence

A dominant pattern in 2025 is that femicide rarely occurred as a first act of violence. In a significant proportion of documented cases, there was evidence of prior emotional abuse, physical violence, threats, stalking, or coercive control.

Women were often killed after attempting to leave abusive relationships, assert independence, or seek help. The data confirms that femicide is the end point of a continuum of violence rather than an isolated incident.

This pattern underscores the importance of early intervention and survivor protection. When warning

signs are ignored or minimised, violence escalates to lethal levels.

9.2 Intimate Relationships as the Primary Risk Zone

The data shows that most femicide cases in 2025 involved perpetrators who were known to the victim, particularly current or former intimate partners. This reflects deeply entrenched norms around male ownership, control, and entitlement within intimate relationships. Violence is often framed as a private matter, allowing abuse to continue unchecked. The persistence of intimate partner femicide challenges assumptions that public spaces or strangers pose the greatest risk to women. Instead, the greatest danger often lies within trusted relationships and domestic environments.

9.3 The Home as a Lethal Space

More than two thirds of documented femicides in 2025 occurred in private spaces such as homes or

shared residences.

This pattern highlights the failure of protection mechanisms within domestic settings. Homes are culturally framed as safe spaces, yet for many women they function as sites of surveillance, control, and violence.

The invisibility of domestic violence contributes to delayed intervention and normalisation of abuse until it becomes fatal.

9.4 Predictable Risk Moments

Certain moments consistently preceded femicide cases in 2025. These include attempts by women to leave relationships, disputes over money or property, pregnancy or childbirth, discovery of infidelity, and rejection of control.

Economic stress, substance abuse, and jealousy frequently intensified these moments. These predictable triggers were visible to families, communities, and institutions, yet rarely prompted effective intervention. This trend reinforces that femicide is foreseeable and therefore preventable.

9.5 Underreporting and Silencing as Structural Patterns

A critical trend in 2025 is the scale of underreporting and silencing. Many survivors withdrew cases due to fear, stigma, family pressure, or exhaustion from slow justice processes.

Across multiple regions, individuals expressed fear of being publicly associated with anti femicide efforts.

She did not die by accident: Mapping femicide in Kenya in 2025

This indicates a hostile environment for survivors and advocates and contributes to continued invisibility of the crisis.

Underreporting is not accidental. It is produced by social, cultural, and institutional barriers that discourage disclosure and accountability.

9.6 Informal Justice and Impunity

Out of court settlements and family negotiations emerged as a recurring pattern, particularly in rural and peri urban settings.

These practices prioritise family reputation and social harmony over survivor safety and justice. They often result in cases being withdrawn, evidence being lost, and perpetrators avoiding consequences.

This pattern reinforces cycles of violence and communicates to perpetrators that lethal harm can occur without serious repercussions.

9.7 Youth Vulnerability and Normalisation of Violence

Young women and girls were disproportionately affected by femicide in 2025. At the same time, youth engagement during MASKAN dialogues revealed alarming levels of normalised misogyny, entitlement, and acceptance of violence.

Digital spaces, dating platforms, and social media have emerged as new sites of grooming, coercion, and control. Without intervention, these attitudes risk reproducing future cycles of violence.

9.8 Mental Health and Trauma as Unaddressed Drivers

Many femicide cases involved untreated trauma, substance abuse, or mental distress. However, mental health support remains largely inaccessible, especially in informal settlements.

Trauma is carried across generations and communities, shaping how conflict is handled and how violence is justified. Without addressing mental health and emotional regulation, prevention efforts remain incomplete.

9.9 Institutional Delay and Fragmentation

The data reveals systemic delays across policing, healthcare, and judicial systems. Survivors reported slow response times, lack of follow up, and inconsistent handling of cases.

The absence of consolidated national data after March 2025 further reflects institutional fragmentation and weak accountability mechanisms. These failures contribute directly to preventable deaths.

10. COUNTY BASED CASE STUDY

In 2025, Usikimye, in partnership with Creatives Garage, presented Maskan, a multisensory installation designed to highlight the realities and impacts of femicide in Kenya. The installation sought to move beyond traditional advocacy approaches by creating an immersive experience that embeds memory, emotion, and reflection, compelling participants to confront the lived realities of femicide and consider their role in prevention and accountability.

Maskan combined intimate testimonies, sound, space, and visual elements to create a setting that disrupted passive consumption of information. By engaging multiple senses, the installation aimed to transform awareness into sustained understanding and action.

Through collaborations with Heinrich Boell Stiftung, UN Women, and Alliance Française, the exhibition was successfully showcased across multiple locations, including Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, Mombasa, and a return exhibition in Nairobi. This national tour enabled direct engagement with diverse communities and provided critical insights into how femicide manifests across different social, cultural, and economic contexts.

The case studies presented in this section draw on learnings from each county visited. They highlight recurring patterns, locally specific drivers, community responses, and institutional gaps identified through public engagement, panel discussions, and testimonies. Together, these county based insights illustrate that while femicide is a national crisis, its drivers and manifestations are shaped by local realities that require context specific responses.

Elis Nungari
Vennah Kemunto
Vera Kanario



10.1. Case Study 1: Nairobi County

Visibility, Volume, and the Illusion of Access

Nairobi recorded the highest number of documented femicide cases in 2025, driven by high population density, extensive media coverage, and relatively stronger reporting mechanisms. The city functions as both a site of visibility and concealment. While cases are more likely to be reported than in other counties, justice outcomes remain limited.

10.1.1. Key Learnings from Nairobi County

- High visibility and frequent media coverage do not translate into accountability, with arrests, prosecutions, and case completion remaining low relative to the number of reported cases.
- Femicide is widely known in Nairobi yet often framed as a private or relational issue rather than a public crime and human rights violation.
- Normalisation of violence within intimate relationships delays intervention and allows abuse to escalate to lethal levels.
- Fear of public association with anti femicide advocacy is widespread across genders and professional groups, including security sector actors, indicating a shrinking civic space.
- Public engagement is high, but emotional fatigue and desensitisation are evident due to the constant

exposure to violence without visible justice outcomes.

- Institutional fragmentation across police, healthcare, and judicial systems undermines survivor protection and case progression.

- Survivors and families face prolonged delays, weak follow up, and inconsistent responses when engaging formal reporting mechanisms.

- Awareness campaigns alone are insufficient without parallel investment in justice reform, survivor protection, and accountability mechanisms.

- Nairobi's experience demonstrates that femicide persists not because it is hidden, but because systemic responses remain slow and ineffective.



10.2. Case Study 2: Kisumu County

Culture, Silence, and Informal Justice

"I will be burying my sister, who was five months pregnant, the following week. Seeing this exhibition has rekindled my desire to seek justice and advocate for justice systems to be hastened. She did not deserve to die."

Anonymous

Hotspots such as Manyatta, Kondele, and Nyalenda were repeatedly identified as areas with high levels of unreported femicide and GBV. Community narratives revealed that violence against women is often resolved through informal conflict resolution mechanisms that prioritize family reputation and community harmony over justice. Out of court settlements frequently result in cases being withdrawn before reaching the police or courts.

Kisumu demonstrates how cultural norms, economic vulnerability, and informal justice systems combine to silence survivors and enable femicide to continue largely undocumented.

10.2.1. Key Learnings from Kisumu City

- Femicide and Gender Based Violence in Kisumu are widely known at community level, particularly in informal settlements such as Manyatta, Kondele, Nyalenda, Nyamasaria, and Awasi, yet many cases remain unreported or are withdrawn before reaching the justice system.

- Informal and out of court settlements continue to override formal legal processes, prioritising family reputation and community harmony over survivor safety and justice.
- Patriarchal authority is frequently abused within households, with men asserting control through economic deprivation, intimidation, and violence, particularly in low income settings.
- Attempts by women to leave relationships or assert independence significantly increase their risk of severe violence or death.
- Fear of retaliation and social stigma discourages survivors and community members from reporting cases or publicly associating with anti femicide advocacy efforts.
- Safe and trusted gender responsive spaces such as Larwher play a critical role in enabling disclosure, survivor support, and community dialogue.
- Justice system delays and prolonged case handling weaken deterrence and contribute to survivor fatigue and case withdrawal.
- Mental health and psychosocial support for survivors and affected families remain insufficient, despite high levels of trauma exposure.
- Children are routinely exposed to violence in the home, shaping harmful perceptions of relationships, gender roles, and conflict resolution.
- Male engagement is inconsistent, with some resistance and minimisation of violence persisting, underscoring the need for targeted work with men and boys.



10.3. Case Study 3: Nakuru County

Rapid Urbanisation and the Cost of Impunity

Nakuru is one of Kenya's fastest growing cities and a documented hotspot for femicide within the Rift Valley region. Economic hardship in informal settlements emerged as a key driver of violence. Participants described environments where financial stress, unemployment, and housing insecurity intensify relational conflict. Nakuru illustrates how rapid urban growth without adequate social protection infrastructure creates conditions where femicide thrives under a culture of impunity.

10.3.1. Key Learnings from Nakuru County

- Rapid urbanisation without parallel investment in social protection infrastructure has intensified vulnerability to Gender Based Violence and femicide.
- Economic hardship in informal settlements increases relational conflict, with unemployment, housing insecurity, and financial stress frequently cited as triggers for violence.
- Patriarchal norms persist alongside urban modernity, with violence often framed as discipline, entitlement, or moral correction.
- High engagement by men and Gen Z audiences reveals both opportunity and resistance, with empathy and allyship existing alongside minimisation and justification of violence.
- Gender norms in Nakuru are contested, particularly among young people, highlighting the need for sustained dialogue rather than one off interventions.
- Survivors frequently withdraw cases due to slow judicial processes, limited follow up, and inadequate survivor support systems.
- Existing reporting mechanisms such as hotline 1195 are insufficient without timely response, protection, and case resolution.
- Limited county budget allocation for gender programming constrains the availability of safe houses, psychosocial services, and long term survivor support.
- Fear of public association with anti femicide advocacy persists, contributing to underreporting and reduced civic engagement.
- Awareness alone does not prevent femicide in the absence of accountability, enforcement, and functional justice systems.



10.4. Case Study 4: Mombasa County

Economic Paradox, Transience, and Layered Vulnerability

Mombasa is Kenya's second largest city and a major economic hub, driven by its port, tourism, and trade activities. Despite its economic significance and cultural diversity, the city remains a documented hotspot for femicide and Gender Based Violence. Economic growth has not translated into safety for women and girls, revealing deep structural inequalities beneath the city's prosperity.

The Mombasa case illustrates how economic inequality, population mobility, entrenched cultural norms, and weak justice systems intersect to create layered vulnerability for women and girls. Addressing femicide in the county requires integrated responses that combine economic empowerment, survivor protection, effective law enforcement, and sustained community engagement.

10.4.1. Key Learnings from Mombasa County

- Economic growth and urban prosperity do not equate to safety for women and girls, with femicide persisting alongside port, tourism, and trade driven economies.
- Economic dependence, particularly within informal and tourism related work, increases vulnerability to Gender Based Violence and femicide.
- Substance abuse, including alcohol and drugs linked

to trafficking routes, significantly escalates household conflict and violent behaviour.

- Digital grooming and online harassment are emerging risk factors, particularly for young women and girls, expanding the spaces in which violence occurs.
- High population mobility and transience hinder reporting, investigation, and follow up, allowing perpetrators to evade accountability.
- Informal justice mechanisms continue to undermine formal legal processes, prioritising reconciliation over survivor safety and justice.
- Despite existing GBV training and civil society initiatives, implementation of protection and response mechanisms remains inconsistent and fragmented.
- Survivors face significant gaps in coordinated support across policing, healthcare, and psychosocial services.
- Fear of public association with anti femicide advocacy persists, contributing to underreporting and limited civic participation.
- Layered vulnerabilities in Mombasa require integrated responses that address economic inequality, mobility, cultural norms, and justice system weaknesses simultaneously.

15000

women participated in the 1985 women conference held in Nairobi, Kenya to talk about issues affecting women

27000

women participated in the 2024 femicide walk in Nairobi, Kenya (the same issues continue 40 years later)

129

With 129 recorded femicides in the first quarter of 2025, Kenya continues to see more than one femicide per day.

44

Around 44 women killed per month,* confirming a rate of more than one woman per day

70%

About 60% 70% of victims were killed by intimate partners or family members. Most murders occur in the home (72%) or public spaces (20%).

5

Average time from crime to conviction: 4 to 5 years. Perpetrators often walk free for long periods, eroding trust in justice.

USIKOMME!

Creatives Garage



10.5. National Policy Gaps

Across all four counties, common patterns emerge. Femicide is known, predictable, and deeply embedded in social and institutional systems. Fear of association, informal justice, slow legal processes, and patriarchal norms consistently undermine prevention and accountability.

This section links county level recommendations to the national policy gaps that enable femicide to persist. The alignment shows where county actions can deliver immediate protection, and where national reforms are required to make county responses effective and sustainable.

National Policy Gap 1

Legal recognition of femicide as a distinct crime and consistent classification within law enforcement and the courts.

Without legal recognition and clear classification, femicide is absorbed into general homicide and domestic violence categories. Patterns are missed, accountability is weakened, and prevention efforts remain fragmented.

Nairobi alignment

- Standardise how police and prosecutors classify gender related killings and ensure consistent charging and tracking
- Strengthen accountability for intimate partner violence escalation by prioritising high risk cases and repeat offenders

Kisumu alignment

- Reduce misclassification and strengthen prosecution in cases routinely minimised as family disputes
- Restrict the use of informal settlements in lethal or high risk violence cases by reinforcing formal justice pathways

Nakuru alignment

- Improve enforcement and accountability in cases often excused as discipline or moral correction
- Support clear legal consequences to counter impunity normalised through contested gender norms

Mombasa alignment

- Strengthen case classification where violence is dismissed as relationship conflict or moral policing
- Ensure perpetrators cannot escape accountability through mobility and weak follow up systems

National Policy Gap 2

A centralised national femicide and GBV data system, with mandatory county reporting and public transparency.

Weak centralised data systems and gaps in public reporting undermine accountability and prevent evidence based policy decisions.

Nairobi alignment

- Establish real time reporting dashboards for urban hotspots and strengthen public reporting transparency
- Improve linkage of police data with court progress tracking to monitor case outcomes

Kisumu alignment

- Improve documentation from informal settlements where cases are widely known but rarely recorded
- Strengthen county data collection partnerships with trusted survivor support centres

Nakuru alignment

- Track trends linked to rapid urbanisation and informal settlement growth to enable targeted prevention
- Monitor withdrawal rates and delays to identify systemic bottlenecks

Mombasa alignment

- Capture patterns linked to mobility, tourism, port economies, and substance related violence
- Improve cross county and cross station information sharing to reduce loss of cases when perpetrators move

National Policy Gap 3

A coordinated national survivor protection framework, including safe houses, emergency relocation, legal aid, and psychosocial support.

Survivors often remain in danger due to inadequate protection services, limited shelters, and inconsistent referral pathways.

Nairobi alignment

- Expand safe housing and emergency relocation options for high risk survivors, especially those leaving abusive partners

- Strengthen survivor centred referral networks within hospitals, police stations, and legal aid providers

Kisumu alignment

- Invest in county supported shelters and strengthen support services anchored in trusted spaces such as gender responsive centres

- Improve access to psychosocial support and legal aid referrals for survivors and affected families

Nakuru alignment

- Address acknowledged county gaps including lack of safe houses and weak survivor protection infrastructure

- Expand support services in informal settlements where economic hardship increases risk

Mombasa alignment

- Provide survivor protection that accounts for mobility and transience, including relocation support and rapid response referrals
- Strengthen support for young women and girls affected by digital grooming and exploitation

National Policy Gap 4

Regulation and limitation of informal dispute resolution in serious GBV and femicide related cases.

Informal justice mechanisms often prioritise reconciliation over accountability, leading to case withdrawal and impunity.

Nairobi alignment

- Prevent withdrawal of high risk intimate partner violence cases through improved protection and prosecution guidance
- Ensure police follow through even when families pressure survivors to reconcile

Kisumu alignment

- Address the widespread use of out of court settlements that undermine justice and enable repeat violence
- Establish clear referral rules that keep severe cases within formal legal processes

Nakuru alignment

- Reduce community tolerance of violence framed as discipline by ensuring formal justice consequences
- Strengthen community level understanding that serious violence cannot be negotiated informally

Mombasa alignment

Address family negotiations and community courts that contribute to impunity in a context of mobility and economic dependence

- Ensure serious cases are not mediated away through cultural or economic pressure

National Policy Gap 5

Fast and consistent justice pathways for GBV and femicide cases through prioritisation, specialised capacity, and reduced court delays. Delays discourage reporting, increase case withdrawal, and reduce deterrence.

Nairobi alignment

- Prioritise high volume urban case backlogs and establish fast handling for high risk repeat offender cases
- Strengthen investigative capacity and evidence preservation from the earliest report stage

Kisumu alignment

- Respond to strong community demand for shorter

case timelines and faster justice outcomes

- Improve follow up mechanisms so cases do not stall after initial reporting

Nakuru alignment

- Address survivor withdrawal driven by frustration with delays and limited support

- Improve access to justice for informal settlement residents through targeted court support and case tracking

Mombasa alignment

- Strengthen investigation and follow up in a context where perpetrators move or disappear

- Improve coordination between police stations and counties to keep cases active and traceable

National Policy Gap 6

Integrated national prevention strategy that includes community education, youth programming, and sustained male engagement. Femicide prevention requires changing norms and behaviours, not only responding after deaths occur.

Nairobi alignment

- Scale urban prevention programmes targeting coercive control, intimate partner violence escalation, and youth dating norms
- Counter normalisation and public desensitisation

through sustained awareness work

Kisumu alignment

- Expand community education to address cultural norms and silence that suppress reporting

- Strengthen survivor belief and support systems at community level

Nakuru alignment

- Build structured male engagement and youth dialogue programmes to address minimisation and justification of violence

- Use the strong Gen Z presence as an entry point for prevention education

Mombasa alignment

- Develop prevention strategies addressing substance abuse, economic dependence, and digital grooming

- Strengthen protection and education for adolescents and young women in both online and offline spaces

National Policy Gap 7

Mental health and trauma services integrated into GBV and femicide prevention and response.

Unaddressed trauma, distress, and substance use contribute to cycles of violence, and survivors require long term healing support.

Nairobi alignment

- Increase access to trauma informed counselling services linked to survivor reporting pathways
- Strengthen mental health support for families affected by femicide

Kisumu alignment

- Improve access to mental health services within survivor support centres and public health facilities
- Address documented gaps in psychosocial support and emotional safety

Nakuru alignment

- Provide mental health and psychosocial support in informal settlements where economic stress drives conflict escalation
- Strengthen trauma informed services for youth exposed to domestic violence

Mombasa alignment

- Integrate mental health services into substance abuse responses and survivor support services
- Provide counselling and protection services for survivors of grooming and exploitation

National Policy Gap 8

Protection of civic actors and reduction of stigma and intimidation around anti femicide work.

Fear of association reduces reporting, weakens community engagement, and limits the reach of prevention and advocacy.

Nairobi alignment

- Protect human rights defenders and strengthen public trust in reporting channels
- Reduce stigma through public messaging that frames anti femicide action as public safety work

Kisumu alignment

- Address documented fear of association that prevents public participation and reporting

- Strengthen community confidence through trusted partnerships and confidentiality guarantees

Nakuru alignment

- Counter advocacy stigma and promote safe participation spaces for men, women, and youth
- Support public engagement without fear of retaliation

Mombasa alignment

- Address fear of association in contexts where social surveillance and informal power structures deter reporting
- Strengthen civic protection measures for civil society led situation rooms and community advocates



She did not die by accident: Mapping femicide in Kenya in 2025

11. SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES

11.1 Survivors and Families as Secondary Victims

“When the case stalled, we realised no one was following up. As a family, we started attending court ourselves, calling officers, and asking questions, because if we stayed silent, nothing moved.”

Anonymous

Femicide does not end with the death of a woman or girl. Survivors of prior violence, family members, and close community networks experience profound and long lasting harm. Across counties, families of femicide victims described prolonged exposure to trauma through repeated court delays, lack of information, intimidation, and institutional indifference.

Survivors who reported violence prior to femicide often faced disbelief, minimisation, or retaliation. When killings occurred, families were left to navigate legal systems without adequate protection, legal accompaniment, or psychosocial support. In many cases, families became the primary drivers of justice efforts, carrying emotional, financial, and logistical burdens that should have been borne by the state. These experiences position survivors and families as secondary victims of both violence and systemic failure.

11.2 Children Left Behind

“The children saw everything. Now they are quiet all the time. No one from the system has asked how they are coping or where they will live.”

Anonymous

Children affected by femicide face compounded harm. Many lose their primary caregiver while remaining exposed to unsafe environments, unresolved trauma, and economic instability. In cases where the perpetrator was a parent or caregiver, children experienced sudden displacement, separation from siblings, or placement in precarious care arrangements.

Despite the scale of impact, child protection responses remain fragmented. Psychosocial support for affected children is limited, and long term care plans are often absent. Schools, health facilities, and social services rarely coordinate to address the emotional and developmental consequences of femicide.

The invisibility of children left behind reinforces intergenerational cycles of trauma and vulnerability.

11.3 Economic and Psychological Impact

"After the funeral, we had nothing left. Court transport, food, time off work, all of it comes from us. Justice is expensive when you are poor."

Anonymous

Femicide imposes severe economic and psychological costs on survivors and families. Funeral expenses, legal fees, loss of income, relocation costs, and ongoing court attendance place families under intense financial strain. Women who survived violence prior to femicide often described economic dependency as a key barrier to leaving abusive relationships.

Psychologically, survivors and families reported symptoms consistent with trauma, including anxiety, depression, fear, and emotional numbness. The absence of accessible mental health services exacerbated these impacts, particularly in informal settlements and rural areas.

Economic precarity and unaddressed trauma increase vulnerability to further violence and undermine long term recovery.

11.4 Survivor Agency, Resistance, and Community Protection

"We accompany each other to the police station now. Alone, they dismiss you. Together, they listen."

Anonymous

While this report documents extensive institutional failure and harm, survivors and families are not passive victims of broken systems. Across counties, survivors, families of victims, and affected communities demonstrated resilience, resistance, and leadership in the face of profound risk.

Survivor agency in 2025 took multiple forms. Survivors continued to report violence despite fear of retaliation, stigma, and disbelief. Families of femicide victims pursued justice through courts, media engagement, and public advocacy even when cases stalled or perpetrators were released. In several counties, survivors and families became informal monitors of police and court processes, tracking case progress and demanding accountability where institutions failed to act.

Civil society movements and survivor led initiatives played a critical role in sustaining visibility and pressure. Campaigns, petitions, court attendance, community dialogues, and memorialisation practices ensured that victims were not erased and that femicide remained a public issue rather than a private tragedy. The collection of over one hundred thousand signatures by advocacy movements calling for recognition of femicide as a crime reflects collective resistance rooted in lived experience.

Community led protection strategies emerged where formal systems were absent or unresponsive. These included trusted safe spaces hosted by women's organisations, survivor accompaniment to police stations and courts, community based psychosocial support, and discreet relocation assistance facilitated through civil society networks. While these strategies cannot replace state responsibility, they reduced immediate risk and enabled survivors to navigate hostile or indifferent systems.

Survivors also shaped prevention through testimony and dialogue. During MASKAN exhibitions and facilitated discussions, survivors and families reframed

femicide as a preventable outcome of ignored warning signs rather than an inevitable act of violence. Their narratives challenged victim blaming, exposed institutional gaps, and demanded earlier intervention.

Recognising survivor agency does not minimise harm or shift responsibility away from the state. It affirms survivors as rights holders and knowledge producers whose insights are essential to effective prevention and reform. A feminist and human rights based response to femicide requires not only protection of survivors, but partnership with them.



12. CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL DRIVERS

Femicide in Kenya in 2025 cannot be understood solely as individual acts of violence. It is rooted in deeply embedded cultural and structural factors that shape power, control, and social responses to harm against women and girls. These drivers operate across households, communities, and institutions, creating conditions in which lethal violence becomes both predictable and tolerated.

12.1. Patriarchy and Ownership Narratives

Patriarchal systems in Kenya continue to frame women as dependents, property, or extensions of male authority. Within intimate relationships, marriage, and family structures, men are often socially positioned as decision makers and enforcers of order. This framing legitimises control over women's bodies, mobility, finances, and choices.

When women resist control, seek independence, or leave abusive relationships, violence is frequently justified as correction or discipline. Femicide becomes the ultimate expression of ownership, where a woman's autonomy is treated as a provocation rather than a right.

12.2. Misuse of Bride Price

Bride price, which in many Kenyan communities holds cultural significance as a symbol of union and respect between families, is frequently misused to justify entitlement and control. In some cases, men and

families frame bride price as a transactional purchase rather than a cultural bond.

This misuse reinforces beliefs that women owe obedience, sexual access, and endurance of abuse. When relationships end or women assert independence, demands for repayment or accusations of disrespect are used to justify violence. Bride price narratives thus become tools for coercion rather than cultural expression.

12.3. Religious and Cultural Silencing

Religious and cultural institutions play influential roles in shaping gender norms and responses to violence. In many documented cases, survivors were advised to pray, forgive, endure, or preserve family unity rather than seek protection or justice.

Teachings that prioritise submission, endurance, or reconciliation over safety contribute to silencing and delay intervention. Women who speak out risk being labelled rebellious, immoral, or disruptive. This silencing enables abuse to continue privately until it escalates to fatal levels.

12.4. Economic Dependency and Structural Inequality

Economic dependency remains a significant driver of vulnerability. High unemployment, informal labour, and unequal access to resources limit women's ability to leave abusive relationships or seek safety. In both urban

and rural settings, women often depend on partners for housing, school fees, healthcare, and basic survival. Economic stress also heightens relational conflict, particularly in informal settlements where scarcity is acute. Without economic alternatives or social protection, women are forced to choose between violence and destitution. This structural constraint increases exposure to prolonged abuse and lethal outcomes.

12.5. Social Normalisation of Control

Control over women's behaviour is widely normalised within Kenyan society. Monitoring phone use, restricting movement, dictating dress, controlling finances, and isolating women from support networks are often viewed as signs of care or authority rather than abuse.

This normalisation delays recognition of danger and undermines early intervention. Coercive control is rarely named or challenged until physical violence occurs, by which point risk is significantly heightened. Femicide emerges from this continuum of accepted control rather than sudden rage.

The cultural and structural drivers of femicide in Kenya are deeply intertwined. Patriarchal ownership narratives, economic inequality, misuse of cultural practices, religious silencing, and social acceptance of control create an environment in which violence against women is tolerated and escalated.

Addressing femicide therefore requires more than legal reform. It demands cultural transformation, economic empowerment, survivor centred support systems, and sustained efforts to challenge norms that frame control and violence as acceptable expressions of power.



13. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Kenya has an extensive legal and policy framework intended to protect women and girls from violence and to uphold the right to life, dignity, and equality. On paper, these provisions position the state as a duty bearer responsible for preventing Gender Based Violence, responding effectively to threats, and ensuring accountability when violence occurs. However, the persistence of femicide in 2025 demonstrates that legal existence alone is insufficient without enforcement, coordination, and political will.

13.1. Constitutional and Legal Foundations

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 guarantees the right to life, human dignity, equality, and freedom from violence. It obligates the state to protect individuals from both public and private forms of harm. These constitutional protections form the foundation for all subsequent legislation addressing violence against women and girls.

The Penal Code criminalises murder, assault, threats, and other violent acts. While it provides a legal basis for prosecution, it does not recognise femicide as a distinct crime. As a result, gender related killings are absorbed into general homicide categories, limiting the state's ability to identify patterns, assess risk escalation, or design targeted prevention strategies.

The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015 provides mechanisms for survivor protection, including protection orders, emergency interventions,

and obligations on law enforcement to respond to reported threats. The Act recognises multiple forms of domestic violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. Despite this, the Act is unevenly implemented, and protection measures are inconsistently enforced.

13.2. Victim Protection and Access to Justice

The Victim Protection Act establishes the rights of victims to dignity, information, protection, and participation in the justice process. It mandates state support for victims and their families throughout investigation and prosecution. In practice, survivors and families of femicide victims continue to face intimidation, delays, lack of legal accompaniment, and inadequate psychosocial support.

Bail and Bond Policy Guidelines allow courts to deny bail where public safety or victim protection is at risk. These provisions are particularly relevant in cases involving repeat offenders or prior threats. However, bail is frequently granted even in high risk cases, exposing survivors to retaliation and contributing to case withdrawal or escalation of violence.

13.3. Institutional Mandates and Oversight

The National Police Service Standing Orders require officers to assess risk, collect evidence, protect survivors, and act on reports of threats or repeated violence. These standing orders are designed to

prevent escalation and ensure early intervention. The findings of this report indicate widespread failure to act on prior reports, poor evidence collection, and persistent victim blaming attitudes.

The National Gender and Equality Commission is mandated to monitor, advise, and promote compliance with gender equality and freedom from discrimination. While the Commission plays an important oversight role, its recommendations are not consistently implemented, and enforcement powers remain limited.

In response to rising public concern, the government established a National Task Force on Gender Based Violence and Femicide. The Task Force was intended to coordinate national responses, strengthen policy, and guide institutional reform. However, delays in public reporting and implementation of findings have weakened its impact and accountability role.

13.4. International and Regional Commitments

Kenya is a signatory to multiple international and regional instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Maputo Protocol. These frameworks obligate the state to prevent violence against women, protect survivors, and ensure access to justice. They also call for data collection, accountability, and proactive prevention of gender related killings.

Despite these commitments, femicide is not formally recognised within Kenyan law, and international obligations have not been fully translated into

enforceable domestic mechanisms.

13.5 The Limits of Legal Frameworks Without Enforcement

The existence of constitutional protections, legislation, and policy commitments has not prevented femicide in Kenya. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that the central challenge is not the absence of law, but the failure to implement, enforce, and coordinate existing legal protections.

This disconnect between legal promise and lived reality creates conditions where warning signs are ignored, survivors remain unprotected, and perpetrators act with impunity. The following section illustrates this gap in detail by contrasting what the law promises with what occurs in practice.

The existence of constitutional protections, legislation, and policy commitments has not prevented femicide in Kenya. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that the central challenge is not the absence of law, but the failure to implement, enforce, and coordinate existing legal protections.

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14. WHAT THE LAW PROMISES VS WHAT HAPPENS IN PRACTICE

Kenya has a relatively robust legal and policy framework addressing Gender Based Violence. However, the findings of this report demonstrate a persistent and dangerous gap between legal provisions and lived realities. Understanding this gap is critical to explaining why femicide continues despite existing laws.

The table below highlights key areas where statutory protections fail to translate into effective prevention and accountability.

Legal and Policy Commitments	What the Law Promises	What Happens in Practice
Constitution of Kenya 2010	Guarantees the right to life, dignity, equality, and freedom from violence	Women continue to be killed despite prior reports of violence, with limited state intervention
Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015	Protection orders, emergency interventions, and survivor safety measures	Protection orders are inconsistently enforced; survivors remain exposed to perpetrators
Penal Code	Criminalises murder, assault, and threats	Gender related killings are absorbed into general homicide categories, obscuring patterns
Bail and Bond Policy Guidelines	Allows denial of bail where public safety or victim protection is at risk	Bail frequently granted to repeat or high risk offenders, exposing survivors to retaliation
Victim Protection Act	Guarantees victim support, participation, and protection	Survivors face intimidation, delays, and lack of legal accompaniment
National Police Service Standing Orders	Require risk assessment, evidence collection, and survivor protection	Prior reports are ignored, evidence is poorly collected, and victim blaming persists
National Gender and Equality Commission Mandate	Oversight, monitoring, and policy guidance on GBV	Limited enforcement power and weak follow through on recommendations
National Task Force on GBV and Femicide	Coordinated national response and policy reform	Delays in public reporting and implementation weaken accountability

This gap between law and enforcement is not a technical failure. It is a structural and institutional breakdown that allows preventable violence to escalate into femicide.

For survivors, the gap translates into continued exposure to danger even after reporting. For families, it results in prolonged justice delays and retraumatisation. For the state, it erodes public trust

and undermines the credibility of legal protections. Bridging this gap requires more than new laws. It demands enforcement accountability, survivor centred implementation, and measurable consequences for institutional inaction. Without addressing the disconnect between legal promise and practice, femicide will continue to be treated as inevitable rather than preventable.



15. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMPARISON

Kenya in a Global Context

Kenya's failure to formally recognise femicide as a distinct crime places it behind emerging international and regional norms. While Kenya has ratified international human rights instruments that condemn violence against women, several countries have gone further by explicitly naming and legislating femicide, strengthening accountability, data collection, and prevention.

In Africa, South Africa recognises femicide as a critical national crisis through policy and research frameworks, including the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide. While not yet codified as a standalone offence in the Penal Code, the explicit naming of femicide has enabled improved data tracking, targeted prevention strategies, and public accountability at the highest levels of government.

Namibia has taken steps toward recognising gender related killings within broader GBV reforms, supported by national data systems and public reporting mechanisms. These approaches demonstrate that formal recognition does not require perfect systems, but rather political will and commitment to prevention. Beyond Africa, several countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia, have legally defined femicide or feminicide as a specific crime. This legal recognition has enabled clearer case classification, stronger sentencing frameworks, and

improved visibility of patterns that were previously hidden within general homicide statistics.

These examples demonstrate that recognising femicide is not a radical or premature step. It is a globally established practice aligned with human rights standards and evidence based prevention. Countries that have named femicide have done so precisely because general homicide laws failed to protect women and girls.

For Kenya, formal recognition of femicide would not represent an imported concept or legal overreach. It would align the country with regional and global norms, strengthen compliance with international obligations, and provide a necessary foundation for prevention, accountability, and justice.

Framing femicide as a recognised crime counters the narrative that Kenya is not ready for reform. The evidence from other jurisdictions shows that naming femicide is a practical governance tool, not a symbolic gesture. It enables better data, clearer accountability, and more effective prevention.

Kenya's continued reliance on general homicide frameworks places it out of step with evolving international standards and limits the state's ability to respond to a crisis that is both predictable and preventable.

16. ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

Institutions play a decisive role in either preventing femicide or enabling its continuation. In 2025, institutional responses in Kenya frequently failed to interrupt known risk patterns, protect survivors, or ensure accountability for perpetrators. The findings of this report indicate that gaps within law enforcement, the judiciary, and the media contributed directly to the persistence of femicide.

Institution	Mandated Role	Documented Failures in 2025	Impact on Femicide
			Prevention
Law Enforcement	Receive reports, assess risk, investigate, protect survivors	Failure to act on prior reports of violence and threats; delayed investigations; poor evidence collection; victim blaming attitudes during reporting	Missed early warning signs; escalation of violence; survivor withdrawal from reporting; increased risk of repeat harm
Judiciary	Ensure accountability, protect survivors, deter future violence	Bail granted to repeat or high risk offenders; prolonged case delays; inconsistent application of protective measures; lenient sentencing	Reduced deterrence; intimidation of survivors and families; erosion of public trust; normalisation of impunity
Media	Inform the public, shape narratives, uphold ethical reporting	Sensationalist headlines; use of minimising language such as lovers quarrel; focus on victim behaviour rather than perpetrator accountability; publication of dehumanising images	Distortion of public understanding; reinforcement of victim blaming; desensitisation to violence; erosion of dignity of victims

Institution	Mandated Role	Documented Failures in 2025	Impact on Femicide Prevention
Health System	Provide medical care, document injuries, offer psychosocial support	Limited trauma informed care; weak referral pathways to legal and psychosocial services; inadequate mental health support	Survivors left without holistic care; loss of critical forensic evidence; unaddressed trauma
Social Services	Offer protection, shelter, and long term support	Insufficient safe houses; underfunded survivor support programmes; inconsistent coordination with police and courts	Survivors forced to remain in unsafe environments; increased likelihood of case withdrawal
Community Structures	Promote safety, mediation, and social cohesion	Use of informal settlements to resolve serious violence; pressure on survivors to reconcile; protection of perpetrators	Undermining of formal justice; reinforcement of silence and stigma; repeat cycles of violence
Social Media Platforms	Shape public discourse, enable information sharing, provide digital safety and reporting mechanisms	Circulation of graphic and sensationalised content; victim blaming and misogynistic narratives; online harassment of survivors and advocates; inadequate moderation of gender based abuse; facilitation of digital grooming and surveillance	Retraumatization of families and survivors; silencing of reporting and advocacy; normalisation of violence; expansion of abuse into digital spaces; increased risk for young women and girls

Across law enforcement, the judiciary, and the media, institutional practices in 2025 frequently failed to disrupt known pathways to femicide. Prevention requires more than individual awareness. It demands institutional reform that prioritises survivor safety, timely justice, ethical reporting, and accountability at every stage.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this report demonstrate that femicide in Kenya is predictable and preventable. Addressing it requires coordinated, sustained, and accountable action across institutions and communities. The recommendations below are structured by actor and are intended to move beyond rhetoric toward measurable change.

Government

- Formally recognise femicide as a distinct crime within Kenyan law and policy frameworks to enable accurate classification, prevention, and accountability.
- Establish a centralised national femicide and Gender Based Violence data system with mandatory county reporting and regular public release of statistics.
- Adequately fund survivor protection infrastructure, including safe houses, emergency relocation services, legal aid, and long term psychosocial support.
- Develop and implement a national femicide prevention strategy that integrates legal reform, education, mental health, economic empowerment, and community engagement.
- Regulate and restrict the use of informal dispute resolution mechanisms in cases involving serious violence against women and femicide risk.
- Protect human rights defenders, survivors, and

advocates working on femicide and GBV to reduce fear, stigma, and civic withdrawal.

Police

- Treat all reports of threats, stalking, coercive control, and repeat domestic violence as high risk indicators requiring immediate intervention.
- Act promptly on prior reports of violence and ensure thorough evidence collection, documentation, and follow up.
- Eliminate victim blaming narratives through mandatory trauma informed and gender responsive training for officers.
- Strengthen enforcement of protection orders and ensure survivor safety after reporting.
- Improve coordination with health facilities, shelters, and civil society organisations to provide integrated survivor support.

Judiciary

- Prioritise GBV and femicide cases through fast track mechanisms, specialised courts, or designated judicial officers.
- Deny bail to repeat or high risk offenders where survivor safety is at risk and ensure protective

measures are enforced.

- Reduce case delays through improved case management, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.
- Ensure sentencing reflects the severity of femicide and the presence of prior abuse or threats.
- Strengthen survivor and family access to legal support throughout the justice process.

Media

- Adopt and enforce ethical reporting standards that frame femicide as a public crime and human rights violation rather than private conflict.
- Eliminate minimising language such as lovers quarrel and avoid narratives that shift blame onto victims.
- Protect the dignity of victims by avoiding sensationalism and the use of dehumanising images.
- Centre perpetrator accountability and systemic factors in reporting rather than focusing on victims' personal lives.
- Collaborate with civil society to improve public understanding of femicide and prevention.

Civil Society

- Continue documentation, monitoring, and public reporting of femicide cases, particularly in the absence of comprehensive government data.

- Provide survivor centred services including psychosocial support, legal aid referrals, and safe spaces for disclosure and healing.

- Advocate for legal recognition of femicide and accountability for institutional failures.

- Engage men and boys through structured programmes that challenge harmful norms and promote non violent masculinities.

- Support families of femicide victims through long term accompaniment, mental health support, and justice advocacy.

Communities

- Reject cultural and social norms that normalise control, abuse, or violence against women and girls.

- Support survivors by believing them, protecting confidentiality, and encouraging timely reporting.

- Challenge informal settlements and mediation practices that prioritise reconciliation over safety and justice in cases of serious violence.

- Engage community leaders, elders, religious institutions, and youth groups in prevention and accountability efforts.

- Promote shared responsibility for ending femicide by recognising it as a collective public safety and human rights issue.

Social Media Platforms and Digital Actors

- Recognise gender based violence and femicide related content as a serious public safety and human rights concern requiring proactive platform level intervention.
- Strengthen and enforce content moderation policies to prevent the circulation of graphic images, sensationalised content, victim blaming narratives, and misogynistic hate speech related to femicide.
- Establish rapid response mechanisms for the removal of harmful content linked to femicide cases, including coordinated harassment, doxxing, and online threats against survivors, families, and advocates.
- Improve reporting and redress systems to ensure survivors and advocates can easily report online abuse, intimidation, and threats, with timely and transparent outcomes.
- Invest in stronger safeguards to prevent digital grooming, surveillance, and coercive control,

particularly for young women and girls, including age appropriate protections and monitoring of repeat offenders.

- Collaborate with Kenyan civil society organisations, survivor led groups, and digital safety experts to develop locally relevant guidelines for ethical content handling related to femicide and GBV.
- Support public education campaigns that challenge misogyny, victim blaming, and normalisation of violence in digital spaces, and promote respectful, accountable online discourse.
- Share anonymised data with regulators and researchers to support understanding of how digital abuse, harassment, and misinformation contribute to offline violence and femicide risk.
- Ensure platform policies protect freedom of expression while prioritising survivor safety, dignity, and prevention of harm.

18. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Phase	Timeframe	Priority Focus	Responsible Actors	Key Indicators
Phase 1	0–12 months	Minimum life-saving measures	National Police Service; Judiciary; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Ministry of Gender, Culture, Arts and Heritage; Ministry of Interior; County Governments; Civil Society Organisations	Percentage of reported threats and repeat domestic violence cases classified as high risk within 48 hours. Number of protection orders actively enforced. Number of bail denials in high risk or repeat offender cases citing survivor safety. Availability of emergency relocation and safe housing per county. Public release of national femicide and GBV data covering January to December 2025. Number of national or county directives restricting informal dispute resolution in serious violence cases.
Phase 2	1–3 years	System strengthening and accountability	Parliament of Kenya; Ministry of Gender, Culture, Arts and Heritage; Kenya National Bureau of	Adoption of a standardised femicide case classification protocol across police,

Phase	Timeframe	Priority Focus	Responsible Actors	Key Indicators
			Statistics; National Police Service; Judiciary; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; National Gender and Equality Commission; County Governments; ICT Authority; Communications Authority of Kenya	prosecution, and courts. Establishment of a centralised national femicide and GBV data system with mandatory county reporting. Annual public release of femicide statistics disaggregated by county. Increase in operational safe houses and survivor support centres nationwide. Percentage of front-line officers and service providers trained in trauma informed and gender responsive response. Number of institutional compliance reviews conducted by oversight bodies. Existence of national protocols addressing digital abuse and online harassment linked to GBV.
Phase 3	3–5 years and beyond	Structural reform and prevention	Parliament of Kenya; Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Ministry of Gender, Culture, Arts and Heritage; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry	Enactment of legislation recognising femicide as a distinct crime. Adoption and implementation of a national femicide prevention strategy. Integration of GBV and

Phase	Timeframe	Priority Focus	Responsible Actors	Key Indicators
			of ICT and Digital Economy; National Treasury; County Governments; Civil Society and Survivor Led Organisations	femicide prevention into education curricula and youth programmes. Integration of mental health and trauma services into public health and justice systems. Sustained budget allocation for survivor protection and prevention programmes. Regulatory frameworks requiring social media platforms to address gender based digital harm. Inclusion of survivor and family representation in policy design and monitoring structures.

Ending femicide requires more than awareness or outrage. It demands sustained political will, institutional reform, cultural change, and collective accountability. The recommendations outlined above provide a roadmap for action that, if implemented, can save lives and restore dignity, justice, and safety for women and girls across Kenya.

MASKAN

Art installation
in Kenya

IT COULD HAVE
BEEN ME
I COULD BE NEXT.
NO ONE IS SAFE
UNTIL WE ARE ALL
SAFE.



IT HAS TO STOP!
THIS IS OUR HOME!
STOP KILLING
WOMEN!!

No body can
ever ask for
this

Dear Sister,
You will never
be forgotten.

Fellow human beings!
do not allow this
to happen to another
person
Stop Femicide

Words are not enough
We HAVE TO STOP
THIS!
WE MUST STOP
THIS!

We remember your
names
#STOPKILLINGWOMEN
#ENDFEMICIDE

I feel numb, I feel
scared that this happen
on the very soul we have
our children.
We deserve better.

whisper

A scream?

A prayer?

Dear Njeri,
THANK YOU.
Yours the voiceless

me?

plea that went unanswered?
A bound

19. CONCLUSION

Femicide in Kenya in 2025 was not an anomaly, a series of isolated tragedies, or an inevitable consequence of private conflict. It was the predictable outcome of sustained gender inequality, normalised abuse, and repeated institutional failure to act on known warning signs.

The evidence presented in this report shows that women and girls were killed after prolonged exposure to violence, coercive control, and threats that were visible to families, communities, and institutions. In many cases, survivors had sought help. Families had raised alarm.

Communities were aware. Yet intervention was delayed, deflected into informal mechanisms, or absent altogether.

The absence of publicly released government femicide data after March 2025 is itself a critical finding. It reflects a broader accountability gap that obscures the scale of the crisis and weakens prevention efforts. In this vacuum, civil society, survivors, and communities stepped in to document, advocate, and protect, often at personal risk. Their work demonstrates both the scale of the failure and the possibilities for prevention when warning signs are taken seriously.

Across Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa, the same patterns emerged. Femicide was concentrated

in intimate and domestic spaces. Perpetrators were overwhelmingly known to the victim. Informal justice mechanisms undermined accountability. Survivors and families faced fear, stigma, economic pressure, and institutional delay. Despite differences in local context, the national picture was unmistakable.

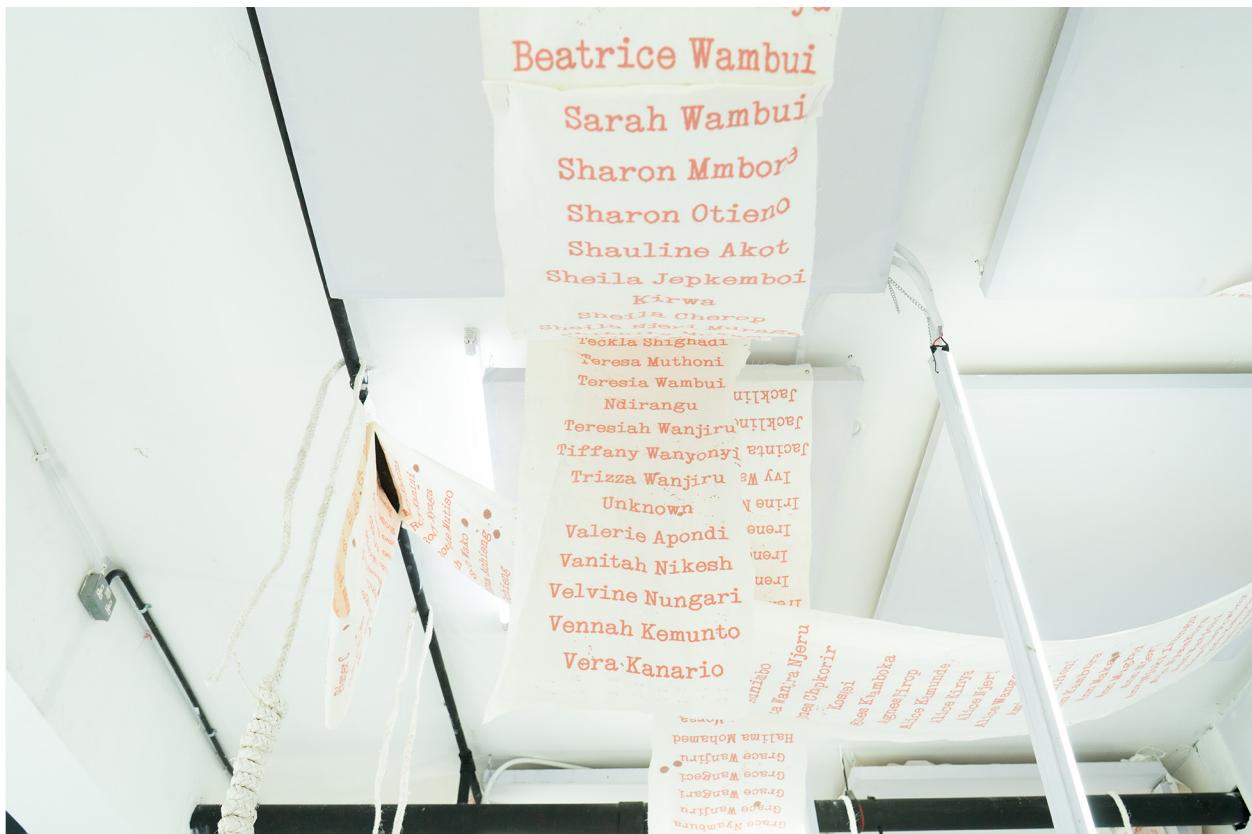
At the same time, this report documents resistance. Survivors continued to report violence despite retaliation and disbelief. Families pursued justice even when cases stalled. Communities created informal protection systems where the state was absent. Public advocacy, including the collection of over one hundred thousand signatures calling for legal recognition of femicide, reflects a clear demand for reform.

The persistence of femicide in 2025 does not point to a lack of law alone, but to the failure to enforce, coordinate, and prioritise existing protections. It reveals the cost of treating gender based violence as a private matter rather than a public safety and human rights emergency.

Ending femicide requires more than awareness or outrage. It requires legal recognition, accurate data, early intervention, survivor protection, fast and consistent justice, cultural change, and sustained political will. It requires partnership with survivors and communities, not silence or dismissal.

Every femicide documented in this report represents not only a life lost, but multiple missed opportunities to intervene and prevent harm. The patterns are clear. The solutions are known. The responsibility now lies with institutions, policymakers, and society at large to act decisively.

Without sustained and coordinated action, femicide will continue to claim lives quietly, repeatedly, and with devastating consequences for families, communities, and the nation. With action, these deaths can be prevented.



ANNEXES

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Primary Qualitative Sources

MASKAN Multisensory Installation

Testimonies, facilitated dialogues, and panel discussions collected during exhibitions in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa, 2025

Anonymous survivor, family, and community testimonies shared during MASKAN engagements

Methodological Note on Sources

This report relies on triangulation of media reports, civil society documentation, institutional statements, and qualitative community evidence. Due to the absence of publicly released consolidated government femicide statistics after March 2025, civil society and media sources remain the primary documentation channels for the latter part of the year.

Data Transparency and Ethics Statement

This report is guided by principles of transparency, accuracy, dignity, and survivor safety. The documentation and analysis of femicide involve high ethical risk, and every effort has been made to ensure that data collection, interpretation, and presentation minimise harm while supporting accountability and prevention.

Data Sources and Transparency

Data used in this report were drawn from multiple sources, including Kenyan legal and policy documents, official government statements, international organisations, civil society documentation, media reports, and qualitative evidence gathered through the MASKAN multisensory installation.

Due to the absence of publicly released consolidated government femicide statistics beyond March 2025, the report relies on triangulation across available sources. Figures presented should therefore be understood as conservative estimates rather than comprehensive counts. Where official data were unavailable, this limitation is explicitly acknowledged.

No data in this report were altered or extrapolated beyond what sources reasonably support. Assumptions, gaps, and uncertainties are stated clearly to avoid misrepresentation.

Ethical Use of Survivor and Community Testimonies
All testimonies referenced in this report were collected through facilitated dialogues, panel discussions, and voluntary community engagement during the MASKAN exhibitions. Participation was voluntary, and no testimony was solicited through coercion or incentive.

Identifying details have been removed or anonymised to protect the safety and dignity of survivors, families, and community members. No names, exact locations, or personal identifiers are published unless already part of public record and ethically necessary for analysis. The report avoids sensationalism and refrains from graphic detail. Narratives are included to illustrate patterns and systemic issues rather than to shock or retraumatise.

Do No Harm Principle

The report adheres to a do no harm approach. Content was reviewed to ensure that it does not

- Expose survivors or families to retaliation
- Reinforce victim blaming or harmful stereotypes
- Compromise ongoing investigations or legal proceedings
- Endanger advocates, researchers, or community participants

Where risks were identified, information was excluded or generalised to prioritise safety.

Informed Consent and Emotional Safety

During MASKAN engagements, facilitators informed participants of the sensitive nature of the content and provided opportunities to opt out at any stage. Grounding and warm down exercises were incorporated to support emotional regulation.

No audio or visual recordings of personal testimonies were made without explicit consent. Feedback and reflections were documented in aggregate form rather than as individual accounts.

Data Ownership and Accountability

Primary qualitative data generated through MASKAN are jointly held by Usikimye and Creatives Garage. The data are used solely for advocacy, research, and policy engagement aimed at preventing femicide and supporting survivors.

This report does not claim to represent the experiences of all survivors or communities in Kenya. It is intended to contribute to evidence based dialogue and action, not to replace official data systems or legal processes.

Ethical Responsibility to Improve Systems

Transparency about data limitations is not a weakness but a call to action. The gaps identified in this report highlight the need for improved national data systems, survivor centred reporting mechanisms, and institutional accountability.

This report is published with the ethical responsibility to amplify truth without harm, to centre dignity over spectacle, and to support policy and funding decisions that prioritise prevention, protection, and justice for women and girls in Kenya.

SHE DID NOT DIE BY ACCIDENT:

Mapping Femicide in Kenya (2025)

USIK[♀]MYE!



Creatives
Garage