

Femicidal Violence in **Figures**

Latin America and the Caribbean

Urgent action to prevent
and eliminate femicides



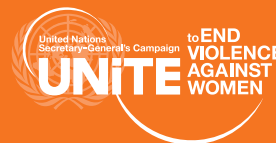
UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC



Gender Equality
Observatory

for Latin America and the Caribbean



A. **Thirty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), urgent action is needed to implement regulatory progress made on gender-based violence against women and girls in the region**

Gender-based violence against women and girls and its most extreme manifestation —femicides, feminicides or gender-related killings of women and girls—¹ are a dramatic illustration of the persistent structural challenges of gender inequality that affect women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Bulletin No. 3 on femicidal violence presents the official statistics submitted by the region's countries to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean on cases of femicides, feminicides and gender-related killings of women reported in 2023. This bulletin is part of the UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign of the Secretary General of the United Nations, aimed at preventing and eliminating gender-based violence against women and girls worldwide. The campaign calls on governments, civil society organizations, women's organizations, youth, the private sector, the media and the entire United Nations system to join forces and tackle the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

The publication of this third bulletin coincides with the commemoration of two key milestones in the process of garnering commitments from States to guarantee the human rights of women and girls and the right to a life free of violence: the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the thirtieth anniversary of the Inter-American Convention

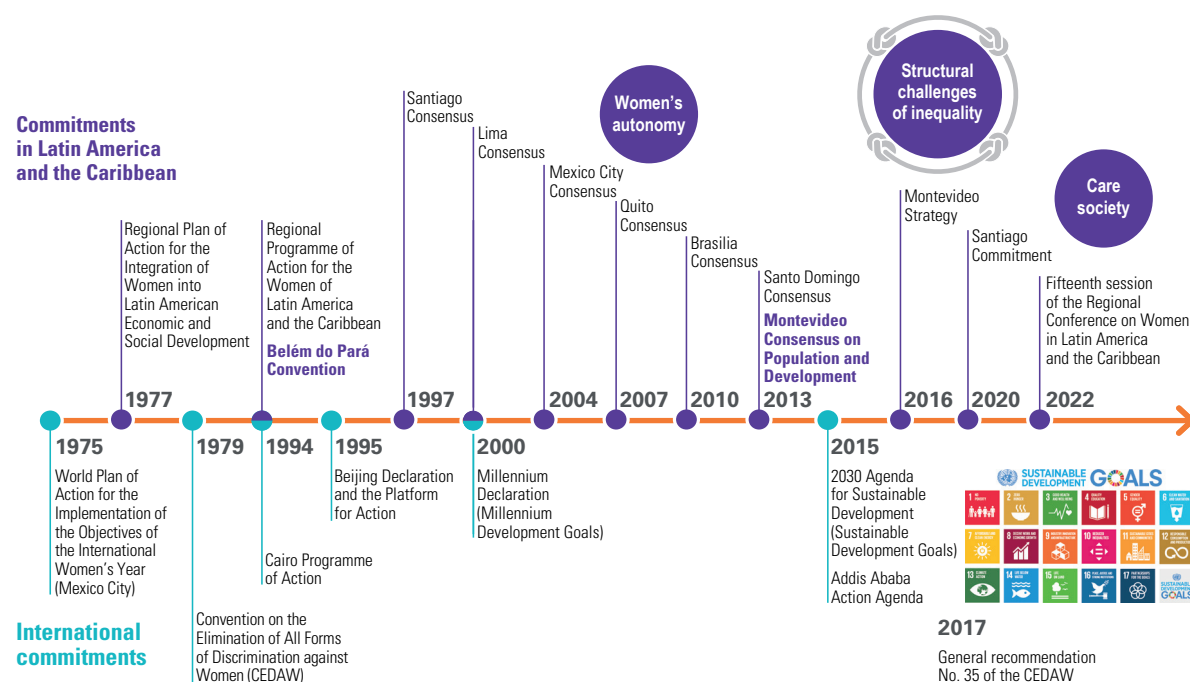
¹ These terms refer to the different legal definitions given to this offence in the countries of the region.

on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), the first human rights treaty to establish the right of women to a life free of violence in both the public and private sphere, and to identify gender-based violence against women as a violation of human rights.

The standards and commitments established in these instruments are also reflected in the Regional Gender Agenda, which consolidates agreements signed by governments at different sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean since 1977 (see diagram 1). Another key instrument in the region is the Montevideo Consensus, adopted at the first meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Consensus is a robust road map to promote the safeguarding of sexual and reproductive rights, gender equality and a rights-based approach (ECLAC, 2013).

Diagram 1

Global and regional commitments to achieve gender equality and eliminate gender-based violence against women



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Regional Gender Agenda.

The instruments mentioned above highlight the importance of timely and high-quality information to take appropriate and effective action, as well as to build public policies that guarantee the right of women and girls to a life free of violence in a relevant and effective manner.

In this framework, 24 countries in the region² carry out at least one survey to measure the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, in the form of a specific survey, or as part of another one. In many cases, however, these measurements are not conducted at regular intervals, nor are they part of regularly scheduled national surveys. Nonetheless, several countries have implemented administrative systems to register cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, as well as its extreme manifestation, femicide.

² According to the World Health Organization's Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence against Women, the following countries have implemented an instrument to measure the prevalence of this violence: Argentina, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

Every year, governments are gradually reporting more thoroughly to ECLAC the data that, depending on the legal classification in each country, is registered about victims of femicide, femicide and the gender-related killings of women, as well as characteristics of victims, perpetrators, and the crime itself.

Despite this progress, the standardization, regularity and quality of information of both surveys and administrative registers remains too limited to offer data that are comparable over time and between countries, or that are consistent between different sectors of government and may be used to deliver public action commensurate with the scale and persistence of gender-based violence against women and girls.

B. Femicidal violence persists and affects thousands of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean every year

According to the most recent data from official sources and the national machineries for the advancement of women at the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2023, at least 3,897 women were victims of femicide or femicide in 27 countries and territories in the region: 3,877 in 18 Latin American countries and 20 in 9 Caribbean countries. This translates to at least 11 gender-related killings of women every day in the region.

Data for 2023 are evidence of the gravity of femicidal violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The persistence of this crime, the most extreme manifestation of violence against women, highlights an urgent need to strengthen public policies and implement concrete measures to prevent and eliminate this grave violation of the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity.

1. Latin America

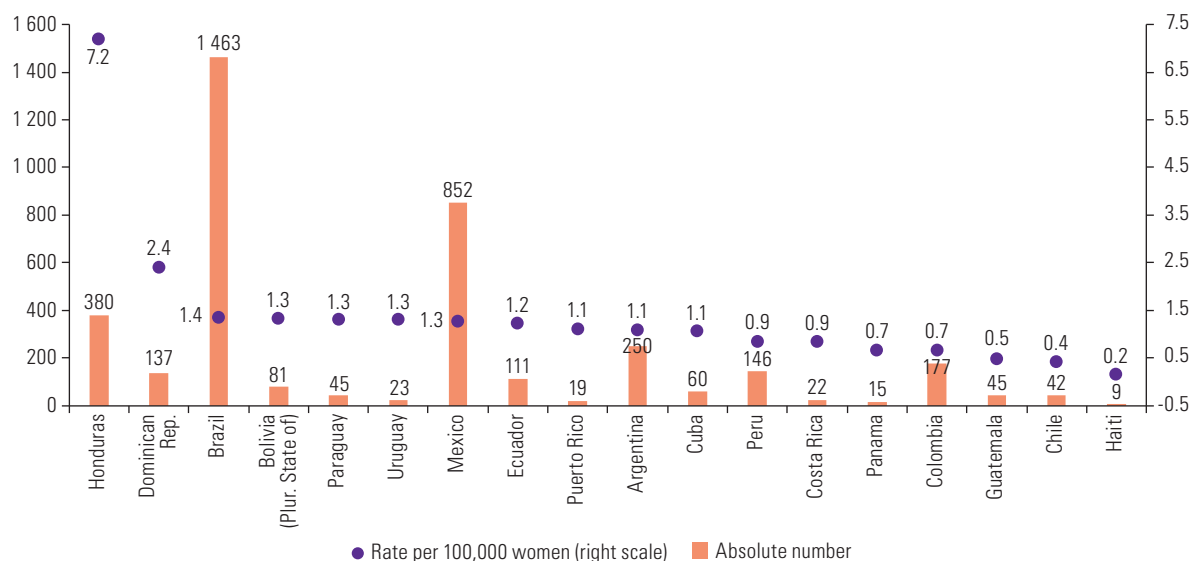
In 2023, 11 of the 18 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean that submit such data reported a femicide and femicide rate of more than 1 in every 100,000 women. The highest recorded rates of femicide were in Honduras (7.2 cases per 100,000 women), the Dominican Republic (2.4 cases per 100,000 women) and Brazil (1.4 cases per 100,000 women). The lowest rates were found in Haiti (0.2 cases per 100,000 women) and Chile (0.4 cases per 100,000 women) (see figure 1). Each country or territory registers information about victims of femicide, femicide or gender-related killings of women on the basis of its legal classification and produces data at different stages in police investigations and legal proceedings. This impedes a strict comparison of the indicator between countries and territories.

As shown in figure 2,³ in 2015, 2020 and 2023, femicide and femicide rates in 5 of 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries and territories (Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic) remained stable with slight variations. In contrast, five other countries and territories (Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Ecuador and Honduras) recorded higher rates of femicide or femicide in 2023 than in 2015. In Mexico, however, this rate has fallen since 2020. The greatest difference is in Paraguay, where the rate rose by 0.7 percentage points over the period.

³ Figure 2 includes countries that reported information for the three selected years.

Figure 1

Latin America and the Caribbean (18 countries and territories): femicides or feminicides, 2023
(Absolute numbers and rates per 100,000 women)

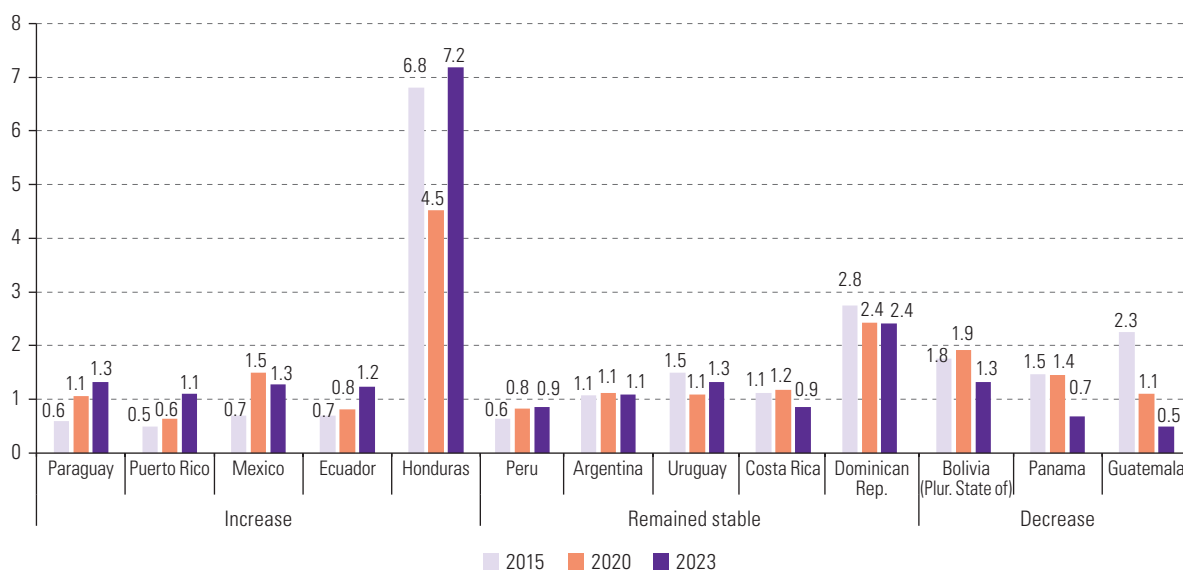


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by official authorities for each country.

Note: The rate reflects the total number of cases of femicide or feminicide during the period observed per 100,000 women in each country or territory, in accordance with national legislation. Estimates were made with population projections of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, *2024 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

Figure 2

Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries and territories): femicides or feminicides, 2015, 2020 and 2023
(Rates per 100,000 women)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by official authorities for each country.

Notes: The rate reflects the total number of cases of femicide or feminicide during the period observed per 100,000 women in each country or territory, in accordance with national legislation. Estimates were made with population projections of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, *2024 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

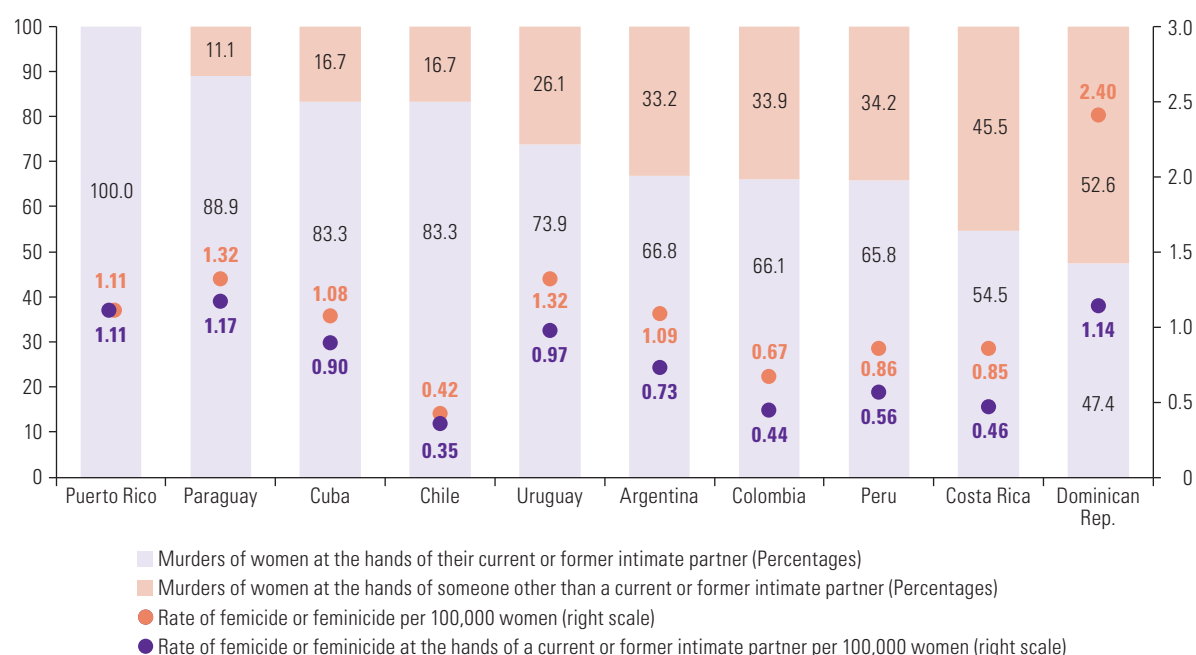
Rates of femicide or feminicide fell in three countries (Guatemala, Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia). A notable example is Guatemala, where the rate declined from 2.3 cases per 100,000 women in 2015 to 1.1 cases in 2020 and 0.5 cases in 2023.

Most gender-related killings of women in the region occurred in the context of a relationship with a current or former intimate partner. Among the 10 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean that provide information on the relationship between victim and perpetrator in reported cases of feminicide or femicide, 8 countries reported that over 60% of these crimes were committed by a current or former intimate partner. In Puerto Rico, 100% of reported feminicides were committed by a partner or former partner. In Paraguay, Cuba, Chile and Uruguay, the same link between victim and perpetrator was found in 70% to 90% of cases (see figure 3).

Figure 3

Latin America and the Caribbean (10 countries and territories): femicides or feminicides and killings of women by their current or former intimate partner, 2023

(Rates per 100,000 women and percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by official authorities for each country.

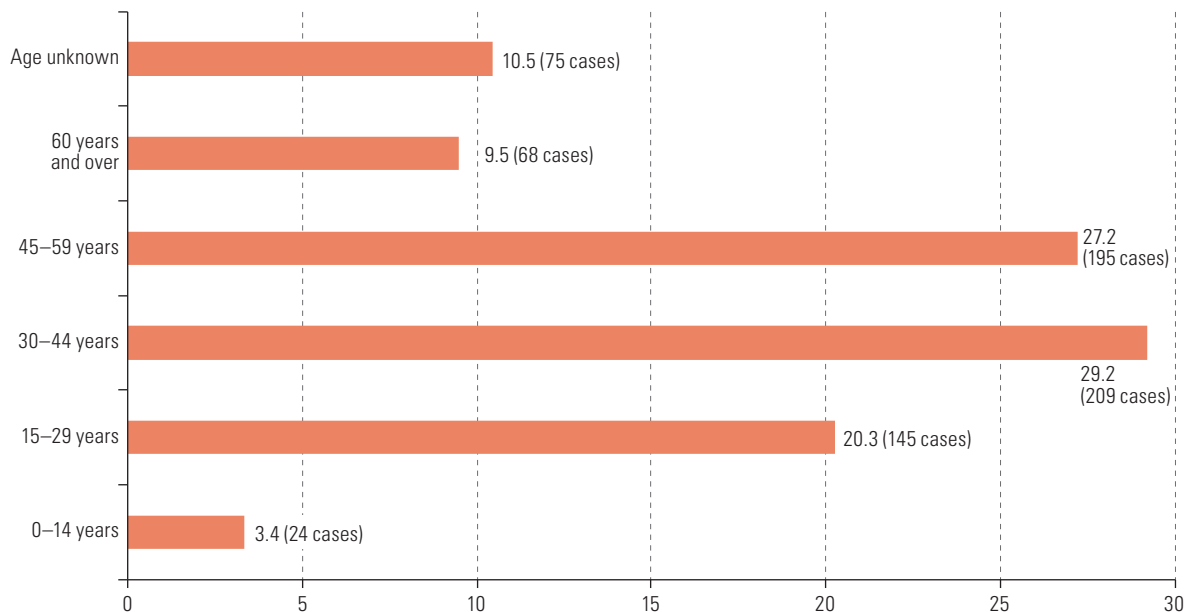
Note: The rate reflects the total number of cases of femicide or feminicide and killings of women by their current or former intimate partner during the period observed per 100,000 women in each country or territory, in accordance with national legislation. Estimates were made with population projections of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, *2024 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

In the 11 countries and territories⁴ in the region that provide information on the age of femicide or feminicide victims, the majority of victims (404 cases, or 56.4%) were 30–59 years old, while 20.3% of victims (145 cases) were young women between the ages of 15 and 29. It should be also be noted that 24 cases (3.4%) involved girls aged 14 and under, and in 68 cases (9.5%) the victim was a woman aged 60 or over (see figure 4). Careful attention must be paid to gender-based violence that affects girls and older women, as both are particularly vulnerable segments of the population. Violence against women in these age groups tends to be invisible, which exacerbates the victims' vulnerability and makes it difficult to implement effective measures to protect them.

⁴ The 11 countries and territories that provided disaggregated information on the requested age groups were: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.

Figure 4

Latin America and the Caribbean (11 countries):^a feminicides or femicides, by age group, 2023
(Percentages and absolute numbers)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by official authorities for each country.

^a The 11 countries and territories that provided disaggregated information for the requested age groups are: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.

In 2023, information provided by 10 Latin American countries on the nationality of victims of femicide or feminicide revealed that most victims lived in their country of origin and 5.5% of cases involved foreign women. Chile and Costa Rica reported the highest percentages of femicide or feminicide of foreign women among all cases (26.2% and 18.2% respectively).

Despite requests, countries did not submit disaggregated information on the ethnicity or race of victims of femicide, feminicide or gender-related killings of women, indicating the challenges of recording such data in information systems, which may have to be complemented by other administrative records. A lack of disaggregated data further complicates the implementation of preventive and legal measures using an intersectional approach.

In addition to data on the number of feminicides and the characteristics of women who are victims, some countries provide information about indirect victims, defined as children and other dependents in the care of femicide or feminicide victims. In seven countries in Latin America that reported 579 cases of femicide (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay), a total of 488 indirect victims of these crimes were identified (see table 1).

The gravity of the consequences of femicides for dependents of victims has been recognized in eight countries in Latin America, where legal frameworks and public policies exist to provide children and other dependents of murdered women with monetary compensation and access to State-funded support services (see table 2).

Table 1

Latin America (7 countries): indirect victims of femicide or feminicide,^a 2023
(Absolute numbers)

Country	Femicides or feminicides	Indirect victims
Argentina	250	205
Dominican Republic	137	93
Paraguay	45	71
Chile	42	45
Cuba	60	38
Costa Rica	22	18
Uruguay	23	18
Total	579	488

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by national machineries for the advancement of women.

^a Indirect victims are defined as children and other dependents in the care of femicide and feminicide victims.

Table 2

Latin America (8 countries): regulations on State reparations to indirect victims of feminicide, femicide or gender-related killing, latest available year

Country	Regulations
Argentina	Act No. 27452, known as the Brisa Act (2018), attributes a monthly allowance and healthcare coverage to children and adolescents who are victims of family or gender-related violence.
Brazil	Act No. 14717 of 31 October 2023 introduced a special allowance for children and dependants under 18 years of age who have been orphaned as a result of femicides (2023).
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Act No. 348, article 36 provides for a system of protection for girls, boys and the whole family who are victims of femicide committed by a spouse or cohabitant (2013).
Chile	Act No. 21565 established a system of protection and comprehensive reparation for femicide and femicidal suicide victims and their families (2023).
Costa Rica	Act for Comprehensive Reparations for Survivors of Femicide (Act No. 10263) (2022) established a comprehensive reparation scheme and fund for survivors of femicide.
Ecuador	Decree No. 696 provides, through the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, an allowance for minors under 18 who are indirect victims of femicide (2018).
Peru	Emergency Decree No. 005–2020 guarantees basic economic assistance for children, adolescents and persons with disabilities who are indirect victims of the crime of femicide (since 2020).
Uruguay	Act No. 18850 established that the children of persons who have died as a result of domestic violence are entitled to reparation benefits (2011).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Regulations" [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/es/leyes>.

2. The Caribbean

According to information provided by nine Caribbean countries and territories on gender-related killings of women, 20 women were victims of lethal gender-based violence in the subregion in 2023. Cases reported that year occurred in Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize (13, 4, 2 and 1, respectively) (see table 3). The data are presented as absolute numbers, not rates, because some of the countries that submit information have very few cases and the population of women is less than 100,000. Together with low rates, this makes calculations difficult and limits analysis.

Table 3

The Caribbean (9 countries and territories): gender-related killings of women, 2023
(Absolute numbers)

Country	Absolute number
Jamaica	13
Suriname	4
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2
Belize	1
Anguilla	0
Bahamas	0
Barbados	0
Grenada	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0

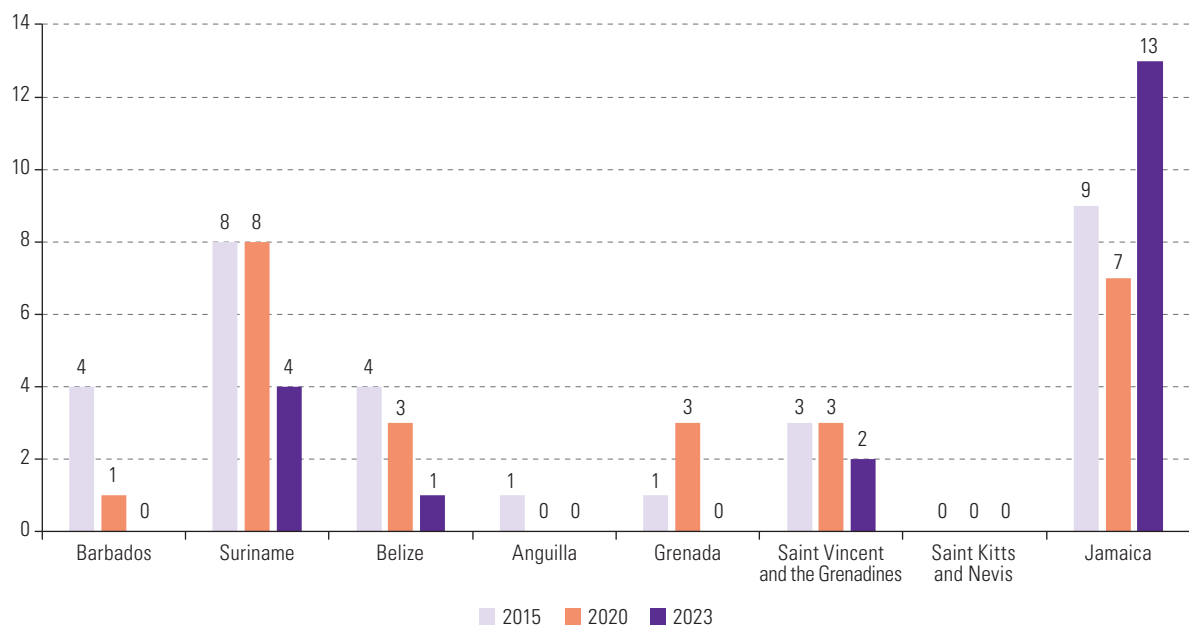
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by national machineries for the advancement of women.

Note: Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname only report cases of killings of women by their intimate partner or former partner.

Trends in the number of femicides or feminicides in eight countries and territories in the Caribbean between 2015 and 2023 show the persistence of gender-based violence in the subregion. Jamaica, the country with the highest number of cases, reported an increase in femicides or feminicides from 9 cases in 2015 to 13 cases in 2023. In Suriname, however, the number of cases fell from 8 to 4 over the same period (see figure 5).

Figure 5

The Caribbean (8 countries and territories): femicides or feminicides, 2015, 2020 and 2023
(Absolute numbers)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by national machineries for the advancement of women.

Note: Belize, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname only report cases of killings of women by their intimate partner or former partner.

C. States have made progress in adopting regulations and public policies to prevent, record, count, punish and eliminate gender-based violence against women and girls, but challenges persist in ensuring that they fulfil their due diligence obligations

1. Regulatory progress in Latin America and the Caribbean

In the last 30 years, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979) with its Optional Protocol and General Recommendations; the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará, 1994) (see box 1); the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, together with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing); the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been fundamental in fighting violence against women and girls. These instruments have resulted in legislation, regulations and national plans, as well as national and subnational programmes. They have helped to build an effective response to, and made more visible, the 'pandemic in the shadows' that is gender-based violence against women and girls. This grave violation of human rights is a social, public health, social justice and gender issue that has serious negative effects on women's autonomy and the well-being of families and communities, as well as the sustainable development of countries.

Box 1

The Belém do Pará Convention: a pioneering framework

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Belém do Pará Convention after the city where it was adopted in 1994, and which entered into force on 28 March 1996, defines violence against women, establishes the right of women to live a life free of violence and establishes that violence constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It called for the first time for the establishment of mechanisms for protecting and defending women's rights as essential to combating the violence against women's physical, sexual and psychological identity and for asserting those rights within society (MESECVI, 2024).

The Belém do Pará Convention is the first human rights instrument to establish gender-based violence against women and girls as a violation of human rights, both in the public and private sphere. It has inspired and works with other regional instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), which entered into force on 25 November 2005, and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which entered into force on 1 August 2014.

The Convention of Belém do Pará, together with the human rights treaties, are supported by jurisprudence on the gender-based violence against women of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Observations and recommendations issued by the monitoring committees of human rights treaties in general act as a road map for the fulfilment of human rights and the due diligence of States in terms of investigation, penalties, reparations and compliance with public policies, institutional frameworks, budget allocations, as well as the development of information systems in the countries of the region.

In 2004, the States parties established the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) to carry out monitoring and assessments of compliance with the obligations incurred under this rights framework. The mechanism is composed of the Conference of States Party, the Committee of Experts, the Technical

Secretariat and civil society. At each of the nine Conferences of States Party of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention, held between 2004 and 2024, States agreed to adopt regulations, programmes and measures to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women in all its forms, and to care for and protect victims. The recent Ninth Conference of States Party of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), hosted by Chile in 2024, culminated in a commitment to accelerate implementation of measures and strengthening of mechanisms to eliminate gender-based violence.

Source: Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), “Convención de Belém do Pará y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing: un enfoque coordinado para erradicar la violencia de género en América Latina y el Caribe”, working document, 2024.

In the last 47 years, within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean —the main regional intergovernmental forum within the United Nations system focused on women's rights and gender equality— member States adopted a profound, progressive, and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda that provides a framework for public policy in countries to achieve gender equality in law and in fact, guarantee the rights of women and ensure their autonomy. The Regional Gender Agenda is by nature cumulative; it reinforces, harmonizes and complements other obligations of the States at the regional level and other treaties and conventions at the global and regional levels. Its commitments are a contribution by Latin America and the Caribbean to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to deliberations at the global level, especially in the framework of the sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Legal and Social Status of Women (ECLAC, 2023c).

The consensus and commitments adopted since the first meetings of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which comprise the Regional Gender Agenda, include measures to ensure that States guarantee the rights of women and girls in all their diversity a life free of violence. The Quito Consensus of 2007, for example, condemns the diverse forms of violence perpetrated against women, especially homicide of women, femicide and feminicide, and agrees to adopt measures that contribute to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and their manifestations. The Santo Domingo Consensus (2013) established recommendations for victims and survivors of gender-based violence to have immediate access to comprehensive care services, psychosocial and mental health support, the treatment of injuries, shelter and care after rape or sexual assault (ECLAC, 2023c). The Buenos Aires Commitment, adopted at the most recent session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in that city in 2022, reaffirmed the importance of comprehensive action by States and indicated that one of its commitments is to “promote the adoption and implementation of laws, policies, comprehensive and multisectoral action plans and educational awareness-raising programmes to prevent, address, punish and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, adolescent girls and girls in all their diversity, in different areas and manifestations, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage and early unions” (ECLAC, 2023a).

With regard to regulatory progress in the region, in 1994, only nine countries had regulations that addressed violence against women in the domestic sphere: Bahamas (1991), Barbados (1992), Belize (1992), Costa Rica (1990), Jamaica (1989), Peru (1993), Puerto Rico (1989), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1984) and Trinidad and Tobago (1991). Only two countries had regulations on sexual violence: Dominica (1991) and Trinidad and Tobago (1991).

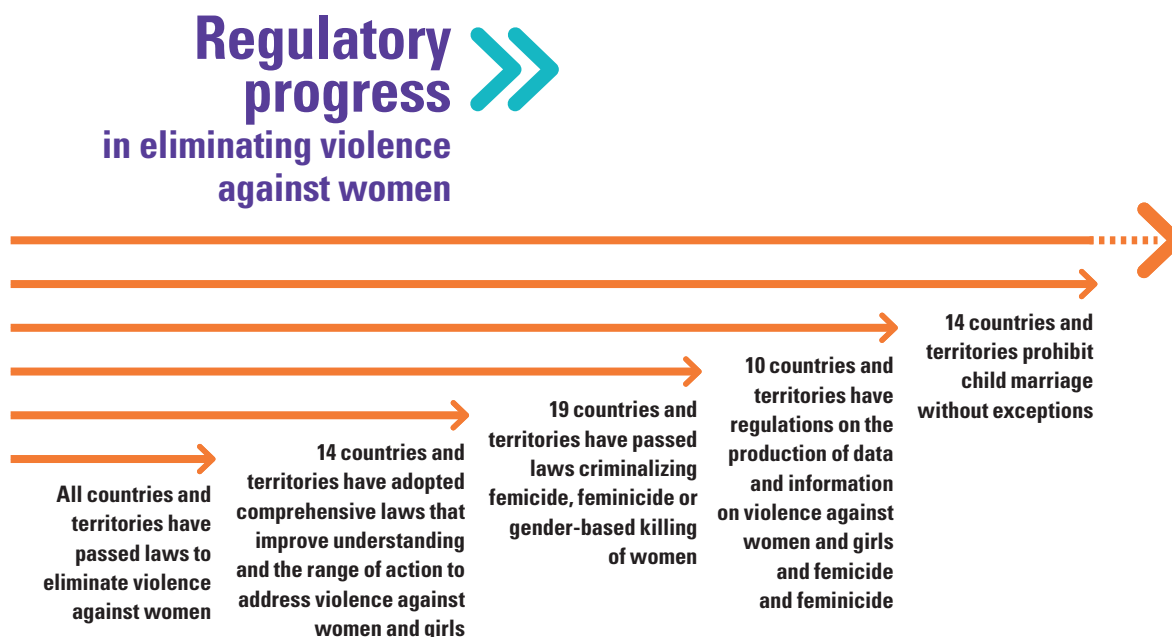
To date, all Latin American and Caribbean countries have passed laws aimed at preventing and eradicating violence against women. Some are restricted to domestic violence, while 14 countries and territories have adopted comprehensive laws that address violence in various spheres (see diagram 2).⁵ Regulatory frameworks

⁵ Fourteen countries and territories have comprehensive laws to address violence against women and girls: Mexico (2007), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2007), Guatemala (2008), Colombia (2008), Argentina (2009), El Salvador (2010), Nicaragua (2012), Plurinational State of Bolivia (2013), Panama (2013), Peru (2015), Paraguay (2016), Uruguay (2018), Ecuador (2018) and Chile (2024).

have also been established in the region to address specific forms of gender-based violence and develop better tools to eliminate it in its various forms. Examples include the criminalization of femicide or feminicide in 19 countries and territories,⁶ instigated suicide, obstetric violence, political violence, harassment in the street and in public, child marriage and violence facilitated by technology.

Diagram 2

Latin America and the Caribbean: regulatory progress in addressing gender-based violence against women



Source: Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of the repository of laws.

Legislation takes different forms: in some cases, criminal law is amended to recognize gender-based violence against women and how it is punished while in others, specific articles are incorporated into labour, education, family and health law, as well as in other legislation. Regulations define the powers and prerogatives of national machineries for the advancement of women of ministries, such as education, health and justice ministries, law enforcement services and public prosecutors' offices (ONU-Mujeres/MESECVI, 2022). The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean maintains a comprehensive repository of at least 400 laws covering the various domains and forms in which gender-based violence occurs. Other instruments include specific ministerial resolutions, inter-agency or sectoral protocols and those defined by parliamentary agreements (ONU-Mujeres/MESECVI, 2022).

Countries have made progress in developing strategies to implement legislation on gender-based violence against women at different levels within public administrations. This is visible in the greater institutionalization of national machineries for the advancement of women, by virtue of their leading role in monitoring State action related to policies to fight gender-based violence, and of intersectoral mechanisms aimed at coordinating public agencies and improving the coordination of measures to address gender-based violence against women, girls and adolescent girls. One example is a coordination mechanism for a comprehensive approach to gender-based

⁶ Nineteen countries and territories have amended their criminal law to include femicide or feminicide or have specific laws: Argentina (2012), Plurinational State of Bolivia (2013), Brazil (2015), Chile (2010), Colombia (2015), Costa Rica (2007), Ecuador (2014), El Salvador (2012), Guatemala (2008), Honduras (2013), México (2012), Nicaragua (2012), Panama (2013), Paraguay (2016), Peru (2013), Puerto Rico (2021), Dominican Republic (2014), Uruguay (2017) and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2014).

violence against women, children and adolescent girls adopted in Colombia in 2020. Another is the National Coordinating Committee of the Immediate Search Mechanism for Missing Women, established in Guatemala in relation to a specific problem. In Chile, Act No. 21675 of 2024 establishing measures to prevent, punish and eradicate gender-based violence against women will enable a comprehensive case management system so that all agencies working in the areas of prevention, care and reparation for violence against women can access the same information and take effective, coordinated action to also avoid re-victimization.

Several countries have updated existing sectoral policies: Chile updated its public health policy on gender-based violence (2021), Ecuador established a national protocol for cases of gender-based violence in sports (2023) and Peru adopted a directive to prevent, report, address, investigate and punish sexual harassment in its Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and its programmes, special projects and dedicated public bodies mechanism (2020).

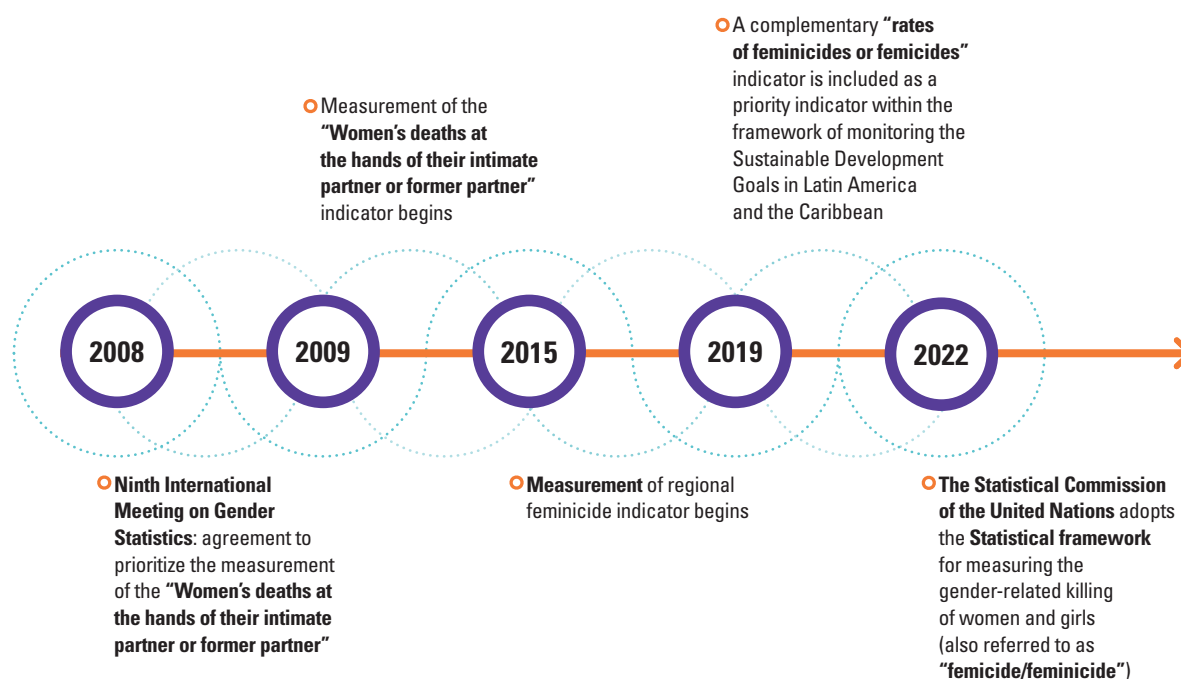
2. Progress in femicide measurement systems in the countries of the region

For over 15 years, countries have made progress in the measurement of femicides, feminicides and the gender-related killings of women, in some cases with support from international organizations that have created instruments and implementation guidelines to obtain key information for the development of public policies (see diagram 3). In 2008, within the framework of the ninth International Meeting on Gender Statistics, a meeting of experts was held to analyse indicators of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean of ECLAC, at which it was agreed to prioritize the regional measurement of the “Women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner” indicator, given the lack of criminalization of femicide in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Regional measurement of this indicator began the following year, in 2009, with data from 18 countries. In 2015, on the basis of information available in 21 countries on the killings of women by a current or former intimate partner and following the criminalization of feminicide in various Latin American countries, a measurable regional feminicide indicator was launched. In 2019, a new milestone further confirmed the importance of measuring feminicides or femicides in regional 2030 Agenda monitoring: a complementary “rates of feminicides or femicides per 100,000 women” indicator was included as a priority indicator within the framework of monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the ninth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC held in Aguascalientes, Mexico in 2017. The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean now requests and receives annually reported information on this indicator from some 30 countries in the region. This includes the most recent annual report as well as revised and updated information from previous years. Indicator data cannot be compared between countries or within a country over time because they are linked to the country’s legal definition of the offence, which may evolve. In Chile, for example, only deaths at the hands of a current or former intimate partner were considered feminicides until 2021, when the definition was extended to include other killings of women.

More recently, thanks to the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics, the fifty-third session of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations adopted the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”). This framework provides criteria, variables and categories that guarantee that data are accurate and comparable between countries and between the different bodies in the national justice system. It also enables the definition of victims, perpetrators and state response, thereby contributing to improving and harmonizing data collection instruments both at the national and international level (UNODC/UN-Women, 2022).

Diagram 3

Latin America and the Caribbean: regional milestones in statistical monitoring of femicides and feminicides



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

On the basis of administrative records, some countries have established integrated information systems that strengthen inter-agency coordination on this subject, for example Argentina (SICVG), Brazil (Panainfo), Mexico (Banavim) and Peru (Plataforma SiseVe). In other countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, efforts are under way to coordinate and build the capacities needed to implement integrated or centralized systems of administrative records for cases of gender-based violence. There are also specific information systems for femicides or feminicides, such as Argentina's national registry of femicides, Costa Rica's observatory on gender-based violence against women and access to justice and inter-institutional subcommittee on the prevention of femicide, Chile's intersectoral mechanism against femicide and Ecuador's automatic judicial processing system and special commission on security, justice, crime and transparency statistics.

Femicide or feminicide registries in the countries of the region are managed by different government institutions. Most are supported or coordinated by national machineries for the advancement of women. Intersectoral coordination mechanisms to produce statistical information on femicide or feminicide are an appropriate forum in which to define criteria used to update and improve information, as well as to promote coordination and measures to expand synergies and optimize their impact. These mechanisms are especially valuable as they are necessary in public policymaking, challenge sectoral approaches to management and serve as tools that require inter-institutional efforts to increase understanding of the processes of criminological investigation and delivery of justice, as well as coordination with the health and education sectors and with the media.

3. Significant limitations persist in States' fulfilment of due diligence obligations to prevent femicides, feminicides, gender-based killings of women and other forms of gender-based violence

Despite progress made by the countries of the region in enacting regulations and developing public policies, a wide gap exists between the gravity and prevalence of the problem and the calibre of the public response. This gap is visible in the various prevalence surveys on gender-based violence conducted in different countries in recent years, which reveal the low percentage of victims of this type of offence who report the incident and who file a complaint to seek justice (see table 4).

Table 4

Latin America (8 countries): women who indicate in a survey that they filed a complaint after experiencing gender-based violence, 2019–2024

(Percentages)

Country	Survey	Source and year	Findings
Argentina	Survey on the prevalence of violence against women	Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity of the Nation/Spotlight Initiative, 2023	Only 25% of women who experienced domestic violence or abuse sought advice or filed a complaint with an institution or organization. Among women who experienced violence, 67.4% stated they were aware of the existence of support services.
Brazil	<i>Visível e Invisível: a victimização de mulheres no Brasil, 4ª edição</i>	Foro Brasileiro de Seguridad Pública, Instituto de Pesquisas Datafolha, 2023	45% of victims “did nothing” about the last incident they experienced. Among those who said they sought help from a person or organization, 17.3% told family and 15.6% told friends. Among those who said they sought help from an organization, 14% contacted women’s police services and 8.5% contacted police stations. Among the reasons given for not contacting police services after experiencing abuse, 38% said they resolved the problem themselves, 21.3% said they did not believe the police could offer a solution and 14.4% emphasized a lack of evidence.
Chile	Fourth Survey of Violence against Women in the Field of Intrafamily Violence and in Other Spaces	Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, 2019	The number of complaints filed for violence fell between the 2017 and 2019 surveys: complaints of psychological violence fell from 22.8% to 19%; complaints of physical violence fell from 36.5% to 29% and reports of sexual violence fell from 23% to 16.3%.
Ecuador	National Survey on Family Interactions and Violence against Women	National Institute of Statistics and Census, 2019	Nearly 90% of women surveyed aged 15 and over did not file a complaint following an assault in an educational, work or social setting or by an intimate partner. On average, around 60% told someone they knew about the incident but did not contact any public service.
Honduras	First National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls Aged 15 and Older	National Statistics Institute, 2023	87.3% of women who experienced violence (in a public or private sphere) did not seek help. Among the 13% who sought help, 40.5% turned to the national police, 23.2% turned to another institution or organization, and 19.2% turned to the courts. Among the reasons given for not filing complaints, nearly 35% of surveyed victims said the main one was “not knowing what institution to contact” or “fear of retribution and consequences”.
Mexico	National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships	National Institute of Statistics and Geography	85% of women aged 15 and over who have experienced physical or sexual violence in an educational, work, community or family setting or by an intimate partner did not file complaints. Among the main reasons for not seeking help or support or not filing a complaint is the fear of consequences or threats, particularly in the case of survivors of violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

Country	Survey	Source and year	Findings
Peru	Demographic and Family Health Survey	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 2024	<p>45.3% of women who were victims of violence at the hands of their intimate partner turned to people close to them for help.</p> <p>29.7% of victims contacted an institution for help.</p> <p>Of all those who sought help, 81.5% went to a police station, 9.3% to a 'Demuna' municipal defence centre for children and adolescents, 9% went to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, 6.5% went to the public prosecutor's office, 5.8% to a health facility and 3.5% to the courts.</p>
Uruguay	Second National Survey on the Prevalence of Generation- and Gender-Based Violence	Observatory on Gender-Based Violence against Women, 2019	<p>Over 60% of women who experienced gender-based violence said they spoke to someone about what happened (primarily family or friends).</p> <p>The most commonly cited type of assistance sought was guidance and information from someone they trusted.</p> <p>87% of all women surveyed said that they were aware laws existed to punish gender-based violence.</p> <p>Nine out of 10 women said they knew of institutions that provide support and care to women, girls and adolescents in situations of violence and abuse.</p> <p>The most frequently cited were police services, followed by the National Institute for Women of the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) and health services.</p>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of information provided by the countries.

Certain prevalence surveys conducted by countries between 2019 and 2024 on gender-based violence against women include questions about whether victims of violence sought help, where they went and whether they filed a complaint with the competent authorities. The answers are alarming, with low numbers of victims filing complaints and seeking help from public bodies specially created to manage cases of gender-based violence.

It is important to highlight this general context of insufficient access to services for victims and survivors, and the lack of public solutions to address cases of gender-based violence. Failing to adopt adequate measures to investigate cases of violence sends the message that this violation of women's human rights does not merit the attention that its gravity and magnitude deserve, making the recurrence of gender-based violence more likely.

Femicides are the most extreme event on a continuum of violence (ECLAC, 2021). Preventing them is therefore contingent on being able to take effective measures in situations that pose a serious threat to victims and survivors. Countries have begun implementing various risk assessment systems and responses for high-risk situations (ECLAC, 2023b).

In order to improve public services so as to prevent the gender-related killings of women and girls, official data are needed on the existence of prior complaints of violence or precautionary measures in femicide or femicide investigations, in order to assess the effectiveness of the services and agencies that receive and process these complaints, as well as to weigh the possibility of taking timely action in high-risk situations to prevent the murder of women and girls. General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, states that the analysis of the data should enable "the identification of failures in protection and serve to improve and further develop preventive measures, which should, if necessary, include the establishment or designation of observatories for the collection of administrative data on the gender-based killings of women, also referred to as 'femicide' or 'feminicide', and attempted killings of women" (United Nations, 2017).

In 2023 only four countries (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay) reported cases of femicide that involved a prior history, whether it be complaints of gender-based violence or precautionary measures against the perpetrator (see table 5). A history of complaints of gender-based violence shows the importance of strengthening protective measures and assessing femicide risk.

Table 5

Latin America (4 countries): femicides or feminicides preceded by complaints of gender-based violence or by precautionary protection measures

(Absolute numbers and percentages)

Country	Feminicides or femicides	Cases involving prior complaints or precautionary protection measures	Cases involving a prior history (Percentages)
Argentina	250	55	22.0
Chile	42	10 ^a	23.8
Costa Rica	22	1	4.5
Uruguay	23	8	34.8

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by national machineries for the advancement of women.

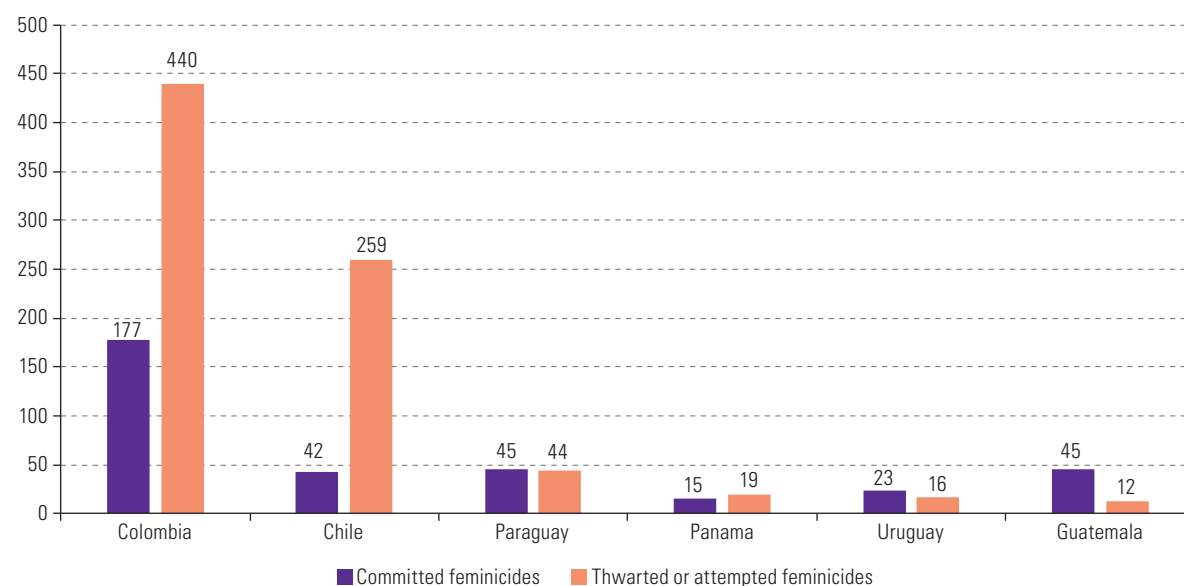
^a Chile reported nine cases of femicide preceded by prior complaints and one case preceded by precautionary protection measures.

Six other countries in Latin America (Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay) reported to ECLAC the number of thwarted femicides and attempted feminicides in 2023 (see figure 6). Data indicate 760 thwarted or attempted feminicides. Colombia stands out, with 440 attempted feminicides or femicides and 117 committed femicides. This information is relevant insofar as thwarted or attempted femicides aim to murder women on the basis of their gender, even if, for various reasons, this homicide is not committed. Including these cases in reporting and measurements provides a better picture of the magnitude of this violation of the human rights of women and girls. Similarly, analysis of the reasons for which the crime was not committed may help to evaluate potential protection factors in high-risk situations.

Figure 6

Latin America (6 countries): thwarted or attempted feminicides or femicides, 2023

(Absolute numbers)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by national machineries for the advancement of women.

Note: Only countries that reported data on this variable are included. The request was made to all countries.

D. Step up efforts to eradicate gender-based violence against women and girls and move towards a care society

At the most recent session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires in November 2022, member States agreed to promote a care society that proposes ambitious and urgent solutions to achieve gender equality, women's autonomy and a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future (ECLAC, 2022a). To move in this direction, action is needed to overcome the structural challenges that perpetuate gender inequality (ECLAC, 2017).

The care society requires transforming the power relations that underlie the four structural challenges of inequality: socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty, in the framework of exclusionary growth; rigid sexual division of labour and unfair social organization of care; concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere; and discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns and the predominance of the culture of privilege. The aim is to ensure women's autonomy (ECLAC, 2022a), which can only be achieved by ensuring the right to a life free from violence.

All this must take into account the impact of multiple crises in the region. The consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic overlap with cascading crises and a downward trend in economic growth that affects people's income and quality of life; added to this are the environmental crisis, the care crisis, and the structural inequality that disproportionately affects women (CEPAL/ONU-Mujeres, 2024) and limits their autonomy. This context and the displacement it often entails increases violence against women and girls and creates a need for specific strategies, in particular for cases of extreme violence such as femicide, feminicide and gender-related homicide, trafficking and the forced disappearances of women and girls (Spotlight Initiative Latin America Regional Programme, 2021).

Progress in this direction requires countries to step up efforts to fulfil their due diligence obligation to prevent gender-based violence and to take a comprehensive approach to addressing the causes and consequences of the persistence of gender-based violence. There is a need to design effective and relevant institutional solutions, including public policies and programmes that take an intersectional approach, with adequate and sustainable budgets.

Information systems focusing on the prevalence and occurrence of gender-based violence against women and girls must be strengthened in terms of quality and the ability to access disaggregated data on key variables to improve public policies. Timely and high-quality information on gender-based violence can save lives. This involves the coordinated management of the information generated throughout the journey undertaken by women and girls, from the moment they enter the support system to the end of the process. Comparative analysis is needed of information systems on the prevalence of gender-based violence and the comprehensiveness and quality of support provided to victims and survivors, in order to assess whether women and girls in their diversity have access to their rights and to justice, or whether existing public responses are insufficient. It is also important to recognize the different impacts of gender-based violence on different populations.

An intersectional approach should be incorporated into national and programmatic strategies. In addition to specific strategies, States have begun to review their policies in terms of how different factors intersect in inequality by analysing the connection between violence and inequalities experienced by a victim of violence in the labour market; their personal income or difficulties accessing high-quality basic services, and the extent to which protection is available against the risk of violence. Gender-based violence intersects with other factors such as racism, violence and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, migration status and age.

It is also important to link and harmonize public policies that address gender-based violence against women with those aimed at addressing violence against children, as they are both examples of a human rights violation.

Transformative action is urgently needed to ensure a life free of violence for women and girls. As stated in the Declaration on Accelerator Strategies for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Violence Against Women (MESECVI/OAC, 2024), prepared during the most recent Conference of States Party of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), States must "implement accelerator strategies for the effective application of the Belém do Pará Convention at the regional, national and community levels, through the adoption of legislative, administrative and judicial measures associated with indicators such as the updating and strengthening of existing laws to ensure the eradication of all forms of violence against women, institutional empowerment, and adequate financing of the national machineries for the advancement of women and the programmes and institutions that combat violence against women that contribute to the enjoyment of the right of women and girls".

Thirty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the safety and lives of women and girls can no longer wait. The Regional Gender Agenda is a road map to build new strategies that effectively transform the structural causes underlying gender-based violence.

ECLAC urges governments in the region to step up efforts to improve registry and information systems, increase budgetary resources to formulate public policies that comprehensively address the situation of victims and survivors of violence against women, and invest in effective prevention of gender-based violence. It is essential to strengthen risk assessment and effective protection measures for victims, and their access to medical, psychosocial, legal assistance and other services, as well as to educational, economic and employment opportunities.

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