



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

UN DAY OPPOSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SEMINAR

NOVEMBER 2018.

BREAKING THE PATTERN OF MALE VIOLENCE

Margaret Martin, Director, Women's Aid

Since 1996, 225 women have been killed violently – an average of 10 per year. 7 women have been killed this year so far.

Women's Aid has been working to stop domestic violence against women and children since 1974. We run a number of specialist support services including a 24hr National Freephone Helpline.

Domestic violence kills women. It kills children too and the types of abuse and behaviour that precedes intimate partner Femicide, mirrors what we hear from women each day. Last year over 21K (21,451) contacts were made with Women's Aid including 19,385 disclosures of abuse against women and 3,552 disclosures of child abuse. We heard

- **622 disclosures where a man has told a woman he will kill her, the children, a family member or himself**
- **756 disclosures where a man had choked, smothered, beaten or threatened to beat his partner with a weapon**
- **531 disclosures of stalking –both online and in person - and**

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel: 01-6788858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

- **217 reports of assault during pregnancy.**

Prior physical violence and threats, stalking and abuse in pregnancy are among the recognised risk factors for domestic violence homicide.

The dangers inherent in intimate relationships for victims of domestic violence are all too often minimized and misunderstood. When Women's Aid began our Femicide Monitoring Project, we knew we needed:

- To record these killings to illustrate the danger domestic violence poses to women;
- To build a knowledge base to help prevent further loss of life;
- And to improve protection for women and children.

Over the following 22 years our Femicide Watch tracked homicides of women in newspaper records. We have never received any funding for this work but Women's Aid's commitment to showing the dark truth about domestic violence has never wavered. One death is one too many but we must learn from these violent and tragic deaths so that we rigourously develop and review risk assessment and risk mitigation practices for all women who live in fear for their lives.

Intimate partner homicide – an issue of gender

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel: 01-6788858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

Lethal violence is at the most severe end of the spectrum of violence against women. **(PP1)** The UN Office on Drugs & Crime 2103 Global Study on Homicide shows that almost half (47%) of all female homicide victims in 2012 were killed by their intimate partners or family members compared to 6% of male homicide victims. While men are at higher risk from homicide generally (being 79% of victims and 95% of perpetrators), **women are at much higher risk from family and intimate partner homicide.** In Europe, partners or family members kill more than half of all femicide victims. The figure for the Republic of Ireland now stands at 67%. (56% of these are IP and 11% are male family members)

Within the context of a worldwide overall decreasing homicide rate, the trend for intimate and family homicide remains fixed. Equally in Europe, male homicide has sharply decreased while for female homicide the rate has remained stable. **Female intimate partner homicide is linked to the prevalence of and the difficulty in eradicating violence against women** and must be addressed as a priority.

Femicide Watch 2018 shows that of the **225** women killed violently over the past 22 years:

- **87%** were killed by someone known to them and

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-6788858
Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie
24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900
Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

- **Overall, 61%** were killed in their own homes (69% for women killed by a partner)

(PP2)

- 31% of women were stabbed
- 26% strangled
- 21% beaten
- 12% Shot

And other methods of killing accounted for 10%

Age range

Victim's ages (PP3) range from teenage girls to women of 66 years and older with the highest number of women killed aged between 26-35 years. 52% of the total number of women who were killed were under the age of 35 and the figure for this age cohort increases slightly to 56% when we examine the number of women killed by intimate partners. The number of killings of women over age 35 decreases as the ages of women increase.

Relationship with perpetrator

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-6788858
Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

When we consider the 176 cases that have been resolved, either through the criminal, or coroners' court, and when the data is examined through the prism of relationship it clearly dispels the myth that women are at greatest risk from strangers – (PP4) so called 'Stranger danger' accounts for **13%** of female homicide victims or 23 of the 176 women. **16 of these 23 women were killed during the process of another crime - 8 of which were crimes of rape/sexual assault**

35 women were killed by non-related known male. In the **20 cases where a woman was killed by a male relative, 16 mothers were killed by their sons**, 3 women were killed by their brothers and 1 woman was killed by her grandson.

The stark reality remains that the highest risk for women is from their intimate partner: **98 women (56%)** were killed by a current or former male intimate partner. Of these: **73** women were killed by a current partner, and **25** women were killed by a former partner.

Murder-Suicide

(PP 5) There have been **22** murder-suicide cases where a man killed a woman and then took his own life. In 21 of the 22 cases, women were killed by their current intimate partner or ex-partner: in the remaining

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel: 01-6788858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

case the woman was killed by her son. 4 cases have included the murder of the woman and her children.

And when we look at a woman's wider family and social network, there were 22 cases where other people: whether they were sisters, brothers, mothers, friends, or husbands, were also either killed or injured by the perpetrator.

Intimate partner Femicide and children

(PP6) Femicide Watch 2018 shows that in the **98** intimate partner cases a total of **14** children were killed alongside their mother. A further **125** children were left having to cope with the death of their mother at the hands of their father (or stepfather). The impact of femicide on the children and the risks attached require serious consideration.

Unfortunately all too often women are asked why she doesn't leave her partner but it is not that simple. Our statistics show that ending the relationship does not always end the abuse with **28% of women** in contact with us in 2017 experiencing abuse from a **former male intimate partner**.

Separation does not equal safety and is an accepted risk factor for repeated and escalating domestic violence and for Femicide. Femicide Watch 2018 report shows that **26% of women were killed by someone with whom they had a previous intimate relationship**. Research from

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-6788858
Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie
24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900
Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

the UK found that 76% of separated women were killed by their former-partner within the first year that followed their separation and a third were killed within a month. Similar findings in New South Wales indicate that separation (actual or intended) was a factor in over half of all intimate partner homicides within a domestic violence context.

The Australian study **Just to Say Goodbye** (2013) which examined filicide found that **children are at particular risk**, especially in relation to **'retaliatory filicide'** where children are killed by abusive fathers as an act of revenge against the mother after separation. In these cases, there was violence and controlling behaviour towards the mother before and after separation, anger at her leaving and a desire for revenge.

Women's Aid believes that given the heightened risk at separation, child risk assessment is particularly important when a woman leaves her partner or obtains a barring order, and when she is negotiating the family law system regarding child related matters such as custody and access.

We need Domestic Homicide Reviews or (DHRs) as they are called in Ireland to inform good practice. **DHR are a multi-disciplinary team, generally convened by a government agency and** have been established in the UK, New Zealand and in many jurisdictions in Canada, Australia and the United States. Their aim is to **learn from domestic**

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-6788858
Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie
24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900
Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

homicides in order to improve systemic and service responses and to better understand the dynamics of domestic violence. Their final goal (PP7) is to reduce further domestic killings and domestic violence more generally which they do by:

1. Reviewing individual cases of domestic homicide
2. Examining the context in which the deaths occurred and any risk factors
3. Identifying patterns in domestic violence related deaths
4. Examining current systemic responses to domestic violence including gaps and how to address them
5. Formulating recommendations to improve responses to domestic violence
6. And collecting and maintaining data on domestic homicide and carrying out research functions.

A number of assessment tools for detecting risk of lethality have been developed based on DHRs (refer to Jane).

In 2016, the Analysis Unit of An Garda Síochána announced it would conduct an analysis of domestic related homicides over the period 2007 to 2016 to identify any trends and patterns that may exist. While this was a welcome development, Women's Aid believes that this analysis cannot substitute for a well resourced, multi-agency and ongoing Domestic Homicide Review process.

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-6788858
Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie
24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900
Registered charity number 6491



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

Chief among the recommendations we are making in the report is that Government to set up a DHR mechanism with a statutory basis, a multi-agency composition including **specialist domestic violence support services, family members of the victim, informal community networks including friends and faith groups. These DHRs need to have powers to make and monitor recommendations to improve the overall response to intimate partner violence, particularly in the light of the roll-out by An Garda Síochana of Divisional Protective Units.**

Before finishing I want to bring your attention the recommendations on Media Reporting included in our report. We believe that media reporting on intimate partner femicide needs to improve and that positive and responsible reporting on domestic abuse and homicide can improve the public's understanding and support those affected as they seek support and justice.

Ends.

WOMEN'S AID

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel: 01-6788858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491