

[Homicide and Gender]

2015



In the streets, homicide is generally committed by men, against men

At home, homicide disproportionately affects women



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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Key points:

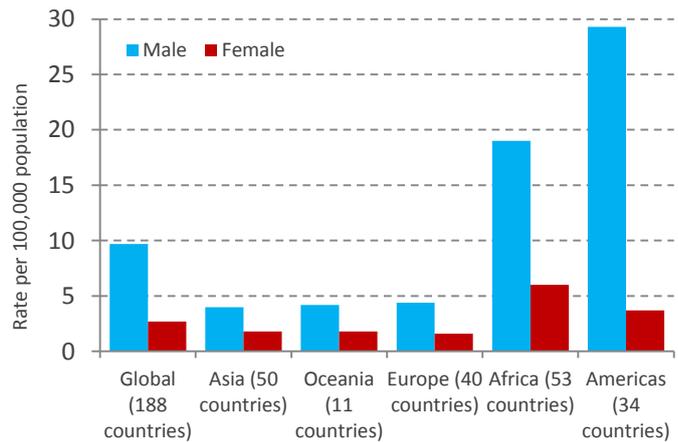
- Males lead homicide trends both as victims and as perpetrators.
- Homicide affects men aged 15-29 the most; while female victims are more evenly distributed across all age groups.
- Women more often than men are killed by their partner or family member.
- The rate of partner/family related homicide is relatively stable across regions.
- In countries with low homicide rates, the number of female and male victims tend to be similar.

The demographics of homicide

In 2012 intentional homicide was the cause of death of almost half a million people (437,000) across the world. Globally, 79 per cent of all homicide victims were male and 21 per cent female. The global average male homicide rate is, at 9.7 per 100,000, almost four times the global average female rate (2.7 per 100,000 females).

Regionally, homicide is not evenly distributed as almost half of all homicides occur in countries that make up just over a tenth of the global population. Both Africa and the Americas have male and female homicide rates above the global average, but the Americas has the highest male homicide rate, while Africa has the highest female homicide rate.

Figure 1: Homicide rates by region and sex (2012 or latest year)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

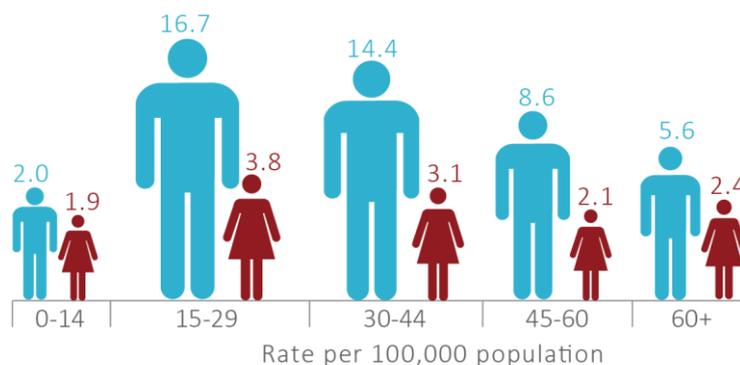
The overwhelming pattern is that men kill both men and women

Polarization exists not only in terms of the sex of homicide victims and where homicide occurs, but also in terms of the sex of its perpetrators. Specifically, the vast majority of homicide perpetrators are male. Available data indicate that this general pattern is also the case for homicide convictions, with men accounting for an average of 95 per cent of all persons convicted of homicide in countries for which data are available. This pattern is homogeneous across all regions of the world.

And while the age profile of women is more uniform, men's homicide rate is higher in the 15-29 age group.

The age profile of male victims is clearly skewed towards the young age group 15-29 and, to a lesser extent, 30-44, while female homicide victims are more evenly distributed across all age groups. This is largely due to the fact that homicides related to organised crime, gangs and other crimes are often targeting young males. This pattern is particularly evident in the Americas where homicide victims are to a large part males aged 15-29, representing more than one in seven (15 per cent) of all homicide victims globally.

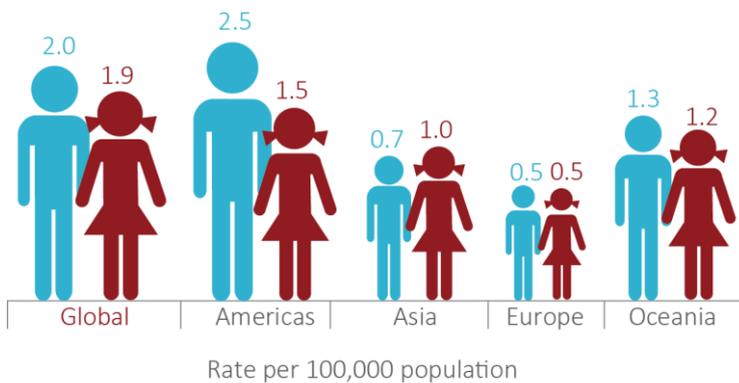
Figure 2: Global homicide rate, by sex and age group (2012 or latest year)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Considering the youngest victims aged 0-14, sex differences are less pronounced

Figure 3: Homicide rates of males and females aged 0-14, by region (2012 or latest year)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

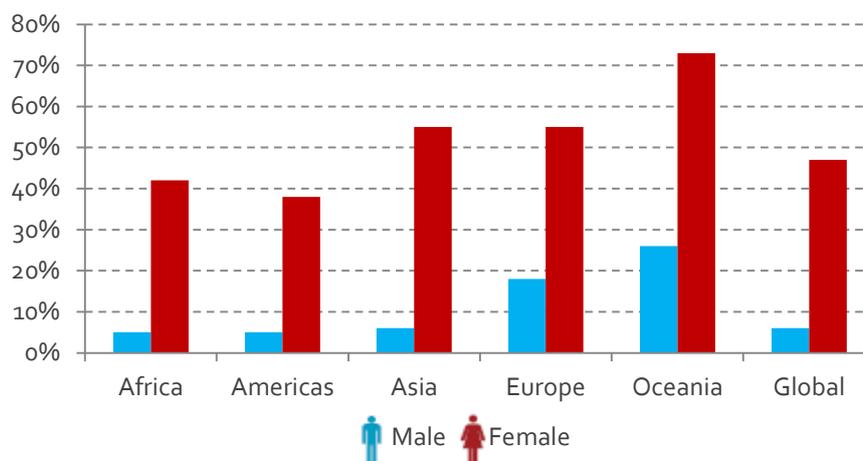
At the youngest end of the age spectrum, 36,000 children under the age of 15 were the victims of homicide worldwide in 2012.

Globally, boys and girls fall victim to homicide at similar levels but some differences exist across regions. Homicide rates are higher for boys in the Americas, while in Asia, girls are more exposed than boys to the risk of being killed, a pattern needing more detailed data and analysis to be properly understood.

At home and in the context of family and intimate partner relationships, women are considerably more at risk than men

Intimate partner/family-related homicide is one form of interpersonal homicide that affects every country, irrespective of affluence and level of development. It is more evenly distributed across regions than other types of homicides that mostly affects males and is, on average, remarkably stable at the global level. In homicides related to intimate partners or family members, the relationship between victim and perpetrator is characterized by an emotional attachment, as well as other links, often of an economic or legal nature, whereas the perpetrator and victim in other types of homicide may or may not know each other. Two thirds of the victims globally are female (43,600 in 2012) and one third (20,000) are male.

Figure 4: Victims of intimate partner/family related homicide as a percentage of total victims, by sex and by region (latest year)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Almost half (47 per cent) of all female victims of homicide in 2012 were killed by their intimate partners or family members, compared to less than 6 per cent of male homicide victims. In absolute terms, the highest number of women who were killed by their partners or family members was found in Asia (19,700 women) and Africa (13,400 women). In the Americas the corresponding figure was 6,900, in Europe 3,300 and in Oceania 200.

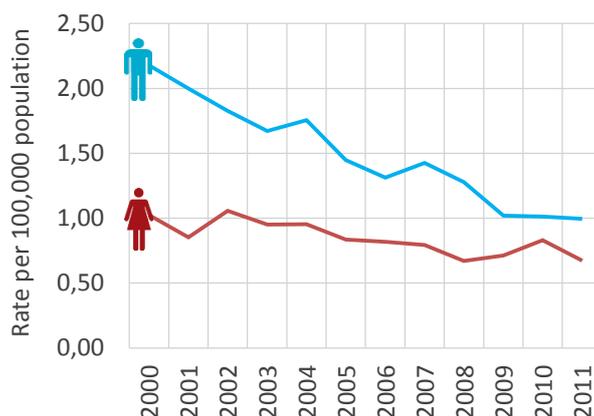
And the risk is more noticeable as victims of intimate partners

A clearer picture of the type of lethal violence directed at women can be drawn when sex-disaggregated homicide data are available that can distinguish homicides committed by intimate partners from those perpetrated by other family members. In 18 countries (mostly in Europe), almost equal shares of victims are respectively killed by intimate partners (53 per cent) and by other family members (47 per cent). Though, in cases of victims killed by their intimate partners, 79 per cent of victims are women, thus indicating that lethal violence within intimate relationships affects mostly women as victims.

But for homicide rates as a whole, in some countries in Eastern Asia and Europe with low homicide rates, the rates of both male and female homicide are becoming equally frequent.

Available data suggest that in countries with very low (and decreasing) homicide rates (less than 1 per 100,000 population), the share of male and female victims appears to be more and more similar within the context of a downward homicide trend. The pace of the decrease is noticeably faster for rates of male homicide than for rates of female homicide, and the historical gender gap is closing. Although the decrease in female homicide victims is a positive trend in itself, its slow pace highlights the difficulty of eradicating practices and behaviours that are all too often ingrained in cultural and societal norms around the world.

Figure 5: Average homicide rate, by sex, six European countries with homicide rates below 1.0 per 100,000 population in 2011 (2000-2011)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).