

Press Release
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**FEMICIDE IN ISRAEL 2020:
A REPORT OF THE ISRAEL OBSERVATORY ON FEMICIDE**

Executive Summary

In November 2020, Dr. Shalva Weil, Senior Researcher at the School of Education at the Hebrew University established the Israel Observatory on Femicide (IOF). Weil had chaired a COST (Cooperation on Science and Technology), European Union-funded initiative entitled on femicide (2013-8), and is the co-editor of a 2018 book *Femicide across Europe* (Bristol University: Policy), and the author of many scientific publications on the subject.

The Israel Observatory aims to be that country's official body providing qualitative and quantitative data on femicide in Israel. The IOF has just released its first report, written by Dr. Weil with Noam Keshet, a doctoral student in the School for Business Administration at the Hebrew University, summarizing the characteristics of femicides in Israel in 2020. This is the first time that a neutral body has provided data on femicide from the beginning of the year until the end. The data was gathered from media and internet reports, Google alerts and reports from women's organisations, and crosschecked with other data bases, e.g. the Haaretz newspaper's online database of femicide, parliamentary reports, and more.

Femicide is defined in the literature as the intentional killing of women because they are female.

Accordingly, the numbers of women murdered for other reasons, such as accidental murder or involvement in crime, were omitted, as were two cases of murder-suicide. Femicide was restricted to age 18 and above. There were some cases where a restraining order was in effect, and therefore some information may be missing.

The report characterized **21 of the 25 murders of women committed in Israel during 2020 as femicides**; one of these was a matricide (in which a son killed his mother). There were 1.8 cases of femicide on average per month. ***March 2020, the month the coronavirus pandemic erupted in Israel in full force and Israel imposed the first nationwide lockdown, was the deadliest month for women, claiming five victims.*** The average age of the victim was 39.6. The youngest victim was 19 years old and the oldest was 66.

The researchers know the identity of all femicide victims, while the details of the killer are known in 81% of the cases; in these three cases, it is known that the murderer was an Israeli Arab. Twelve of the 21 femicide victims, or **57% of all femicide cases in 2020, were Israeli Arabs, six of whom were Bedouin, although Arabs only constitute c.20% of the total Israeli population.** One victim was an immigrant from Ethiopia and four were immigrants from former Soviet Union countries. **In 17 of the 18 cases where police knew the identity of the perpetrator, the murderer was a male relative,** and in 13 cases it was the victim's partner/spouse.

The report also looked at the weapons used in the murders. Of the 20 cases where that information was available, **seven women were murdered by stabbing and six were shot to death.** Two died as a result of a blunt force trauma, two were strangled, two were beaten to death, and one victim was thrown to her death.

Authorities had received previous complaints about domestic violence in one third of all the cases. So far, only seven indictments have been filed over these murders.