



**VIOLENCE LEFT
WITHOUT ACTION**

FEMICIDE IN ARMENIA

2022-2024 report



Ընդդեմ կանանց սեփական
բռնության կոալիցիա
Coalition to stop violence
against women

The goal of this report is to inform state institutions and the wider public about the phenomenon of femicide, its reasons, the link between femicide and domestic violence. It also aims to expose the systemic gaps in the legislative and legal systems through the analysis of court verdicts on femicide cases.

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This report is dedicated to the memory of all women murdered due to femicide while the state failed to act

Stella Chandiryan

Legal researcher on gender issues, lawyer, specialist of International and European comparative law

Translation by Anna Shahnazaryan

Cover and illustration by Zartprint

! WARNING: This material contains graphic scenes and descriptions of murder.

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Violence Left Without Action: Femicide in Armenia, 2022-2024 Report

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Coalition to Stop Violence against Women

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a critical issue central to the fields of human rights and public health. Femicide is its extreme manifestation, the prevalence of which is alarming across the globe.

Femicide, as a manifestation of discrimination against women, remains insufficiently researched. This is largely due to the nature of the offence, scarcity of reliable and comprehensive statistical data, and lack of a unified definition of femicide across different countries.

According to the World Health Organization, 38% of murders of women are conducted by their current or former intimate partners.¹ Every 10 minutes a woman is killed by her partner or other family member.² Only in 2023, around 85.000³ women were murdered, with the perpetrators for 51.100 of them being their partners or other family members.⁴ However, these figures do not reflect the full and real picture of the number of cases involving femicide.⁵

Femicide is a crime that the patriarchal system depoliticizes and interprets as a crime committed by ‘crazy individuals,’ resulting in many perpetrators not receiving proportionate punishment. By justifying these killings, the system pursues to preserve itself.

To eliminate the root causes of femicide, it is important to recognize it as a political crime that requires universal acknowledgment and systemic response. It is crucial to address its true roots with the understanding that femicide is the extreme manifestation of power and control exerted over a woman’s life and body.

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¹Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women?>

²Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2024/November/one-woman-is-killed-every-10-minutes-by-their-intimate-partners-or-other-family-members.html>

³More details available at: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2024/November/explainer_-what-are-femicide-reviews.html

⁴More details available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/briefs/Femicide_Brief_2024.pdf

⁵More details available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_5.pdf?

FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING FEMICIDE CASES

The research of femicide cases can be conducted through any or in combination of the following approaches:⁶

- **Feminist approach**, which studies the cases of murders of women while at the same time defying patriarchal oppression,
- **Sociological approach**, which focuses on the specific characteristics of the murders of women, which make femicide a distinct phenomenon,
- **Criminological approach**, which addresses femicide as a type of crime,
- **Human rights approach**, which looks into the wider scope of femicide considering it an extreme form of violence against women,
- **Decolonial approach**, which studies the cases of femicide in light of colonial domination, including the “honor killings.”

Within this report, **the cases of femicide**, their causal link with gender violence **will be studied with the feminist and human rights approaches.**

At the root of the feminist approach is analysis of power (over) practices in the patriarchal system. The fundamental principle of patriarchy is power and power over, which are unequally distributed between women and men, with men holding power over and using violence to maintain control over women.

Although the root causes of femicide have long been exposed and discussed in various studies, there are certain differences between countries in how the crime is committed; whether femicide is recognized and responded to; how it is interpreted; and types of punishment given to perpetrators. There is little research conducted in Armenia on femicide. The first study⁷ was commissioned by the “Coalition to Stop Violence against Women” in 2016, which was primarily exploratory in nature and aimed to present the stories of women murdered between 2010 and 2015.

The second report that came out in 2018⁸ covers cases of femicide conducted from 2016 to 2017, while the third 2022 report⁹ covers cases documented between 2018 and 2021. The second and third reports primarily focus on the

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⁶More details available at: <https://coalitionagainstvviolence.am/en/publication/lrecvats-dzayner-knaspanutyuny-hayastanum/>

⁷Available at: <https://coalitionagainstvviolence.am/en/publication/knaspanutyuny-hayastanum-lur-hamacharak/>

⁸Available at: <https://coalitionagainstvviolence.am/en/publication/lrecvats-dzayner-knaspanutyuny-hayastanum/>

⁹Available at: <https://coalitionagainstvviolence.am/en/publication/antesvats-brnutyun%E2%80%A4-knaspanutyuny-hayastanum/>

systemic and deeply rooted reasons of the phenomenon of femicide while discussing the litigation of these cases.

This is the fourth report in this series which addresses the problem of femicide in Armenia and presents the cases documented and publicly available between 2022 and 2024.

Documented and publicly available cases of femicide

This report presents femicide cases based on the information registered in Armenia and available in the DataLex online judicial information portal.

These figures do not reflect the real numbers of femicide, as a number of reasons come to explain why.

1. In Armenia, there is no official record-keeping for femicide cases, resulting in a lack of consistent and reliable statistical data on the subject.

Gender-based violence is generally a form of latent violence, meaning that information and statistical data about this type of violence do not fully reflect the true extent of the violence. However, in contexts where the state does not collect any statistics on femicide cases at all, obtaining accurate information becomes even more difficult. In this regard, it is important to note that as early as in 2016, in its concluding observations concerning Armenia, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women highlighted the issue of incomplete and inaccurate statistical data.¹⁰

It is also crucial to emphasize that in practice, there are cases where women, after experiencing severe or prolonged violence, commit suicide. These cases are often omitted from official statistics and are not classified as femicide; sometimes, they even remain uninvestigated.

2. Not all court cases are available on DataLex information system.

This report is based solely on criminal cases available in the DataLex judicial information system, and only within the scope and extent presented on that platform. **It is important to note that femicide cases committed in 2024 were not publicly accessible in the system.**

Femicide cases recorded in 2022 and 2023 for which relevant information is either unavailable in the system or access is restricted have also been excluded from the report.

¹⁰UN CEDAW Concluding Observations on Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6), available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/402/29/PDF/N1640229.pdf?OpenElement>

Additionally, during the review of criminal cases available in the DataLex system, some cases were identified but ultimately excluded due to incomplete identification of the victim (incomplete name) or the absence of gender/sex-related information.

3. It was impossible to include in the research criminal pretrial cases on femicide, neither to clarify accurate statistics on the number of such investigations.

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women sent information requests to the Investigative Committee of Armenia and General Prosecutor’s office, the response to which **was that the Investigative Committee does not maintain statistics¹¹ on cases of femicide, nor on crimes with features of the following:** Articles 155-156 of the New Criminal Code of Armenia; Article 174, Part 4; Article 175, Part 2; Article 176, Part 2, Clause 2; Article 185, Part 3, Clause2; Article 186, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 188, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 189, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 191, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 192, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 193, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 198, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 199, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 200, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 402, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 450, Part 2, Clause 8.

As for the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Armenia, their official response¹² reveals that while they **do maintain statistics on how many criminal cases, out of those investigated under relevant articles, were submitted to court trial with an indictment, it does not track how many of those cases involved women and/or underage girls as victims.** Moreover, it does not collect statistics on cases in which **trans women were victims.**

The situation is slightly different in the police system.¹³ **According to** statistical data provided by the Information Center of the **Armenia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs Police, 39 femicide cases were recorded between 2022 and December 31, 2024** — with 19 cases in 2022, 9 in 2023, and 11 in 2024. However, the police does not keep statistics on criminal cases where trans women are identified as victims either.

¹¹According to letter № 12/12/210646-2025 of the Chief Department of Special Tasks of the Investigative Committee of Armenia dated 18-06-2025.

¹²According to letter № 20.5/20.5/13363-2025 of the General Prosecutor’s Office dated 18.06.2025.

¹³According to letter № 10/295 of the Department of Public Relations and Information of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Armenia dated 01-07-2025.

Researched criminal cases

On May 5, 2021, Armenia’s new and currently operating Criminal Code¹⁴ was adopted. It was enacted on July 1, 2022 with the exception of cases falling under Article 551, Parts 2-5. For all the crimes committed before July 1, 2022, the old Criminal Code¹⁵ adopted on April 18, 2003 applied.

DataLex judicial information platform features the “smart search” tool,¹⁶ which allows to select the respective article of the Criminal Code and see all those criminal cases that were filed on the basis of this article and inserted in the information system.

After the adoption of the new Criminal Code, however, this tool was not upgraded and it was the case throughout the whole period of this research – June 9, 2005 to July 11, 2025. It is also important to note that while it is technically possible to enter the number of the new Code article and receive outputs on the “smart search” tool, it is not true for all articles. For example, under the previous Criminal Code, the offence of murder was regulated under Article 104, while it is currently regulated under 155 of the new Code. In the previous Criminal Code, this number was regulating the offence related to “Forcing participation in a strike or forcing withdrawal from a strike.” Because the “smart search” tool is not upgraded, by inserting article number ‘155’, the system automatically generates all the criminal cases that were initially marked by this number, including those filed under forced strikes. This creates a true chaos; and the situation gets worse when searching for an article that exists in the new Criminal Code; however, such an article¹⁷ or part/clause of an article did not exist in the old Code. Examples include: Article 198, Part 3, Clause 3; or Article 199, Part 3, Clause 3; etc.

As a result, what was possible to research through the DataLex judicial information system were criminal cases with offences under the following articles of the old Criminal Code: Articles 104; 105; 109; 110; 111; as well as Article 112, Part 2, Clause 14; Article 131, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 133, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 138, Part 2, Clause 4; and Article 139, Part 2, Clause 4. From the new Criminal Code, the criminal cases falling under the following articles were researched: Articles 155-156; Articles 161-166; Article 174, Part 4; Article 175, Part 2; Article 176, Part 2, Clause 2; Article 185, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 186, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 188, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 189, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 191, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 192, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 193, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 198, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 199, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 200,

¹⁴Available at: <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/208879/latest>

¹⁵Available at: <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/69646>

¹⁶Available at: <https://datalex.am/?app=AppSmartSearch>

¹⁷The old Criminal Code had 398 articles, while the new one has 552 articles.

Part 3, Clause 2; Article 402, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 450, Part 2, Clause 8.

By using the “smart search” tool and the search-generated table of “Contents of the verdict”, **a total 357 criminal cases tried by the courts between 2022 and 2024 were studied, of which:**

→ **99 criminal cases filed under the old Criminal Code, of which:**

- 48 criminal cases under Article 104,
- 30 criminal cases under Article 105,
- 4 criminal cases under Article 109,
- 12 criminal cases under Article 110,
- 5 criminal cases under Article 112, Part 2, Clause 14).

Access to information for 10 out of the 99 criminal cases was restricted on DataLex.

We were unable to detect criminal cases filed between 2022 and 2024 under the old Criminal Code’s Article 111, Article 131, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 133, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 138, Part 2, Clause 4; and Article 139, Part 2, Clause 4.

→ **258 criminal cases filed under the new Criminal Code, of which:**

- 48 criminal cases under Article 155,
- 5 criminal cases under Article 162,
- 7 criminal cases under Article 165,
- 189 criminal cases under Article 166,
- 8 criminal cases under Article 175, Part 2,
- 1 criminal case under Article 176, Part 2, Clause 2.

Access to information for 18 out of the 258 criminal cases was restricted on DataLex.

We were unable to detect criminal cases filed between 2022 and 2024 under the new Criminal Codes Articles 156; 161; 163-164; as well as Article 174, Part 4; Article 185, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 186, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 188, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 189, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 191, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 192, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 193, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 198, Part 3, Clause 3; Article 199, Part 3, Clause 3, Article 200, Part 3, Clause 2; Article 402, Part 3, Clause 2, Article 450, Part 2, Clause 8.

As a result, out of the **357 identified criminal cases, 11 cases of femicide were detected, of which 10 were committed from 2022-2023, 1 was committed in 2021 with the criminal case opened in 2022.**

Methodology for the presentation of femicide cases

Aside from the criminal cases, this report also includes **11 cases of femicide that were not identified** on the judicial information system, however information about them was obtained from the publications of the Investigative Committee, the Police and mass media.

As a result, this report covers 22 cases of femicide, committed between 2022-2024.

The cases of femicide are presented under 4 headings:

- 1. Femicide cases with completed criminal trials and court verdicts in force;**
- 2. Femicide cases with ongoing criminal proceedings or dropped;**
- 3. Cases of femicide committed in a state of criminal irresponsibility (mental incapacity);**
- 4. Cases of femicide not identified on DataLex.**

Femicide as a term and its scope of application¹⁸

Femicide is a relatively new term used to describe the killing of women motivated by misogyny. However, the phenomenon it represents is as old as patriarchy itself.¹⁹

Femicide as a term at the theoretical level

At the theoretical level, the term femicide began to circulate in the 1970s, emphasizing the gender-based nature of the killings of women. Until then, such acts were described using the more gender-neutral term “homicide”. The emergence of the term “femicide” was driven by the recognition **that the definition of “homicide” did not capture the discriminatory, oppressive, unequal, and systemic violence against women.**

In 1990, Diana Russell and Jane Caputi defined femicide as: “...the murder of women by men motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership of women.”²⁰

Later, Diana Russell and Jill Radford proposed another definition: “...the misogynistic killing of women by men.”²¹ Already in 2001, Diana Russell and Roberta Harmes expanded the definition further to: **“the killing of females by males because they are females,”²² thus encompassing all killings on the grounds of both sexism and hatred.**

Femicide as a term on the international level

In 2012, during a symposium held in Vienna dedicated to elimination of violence against women and femicide, the Vienna Declaration on Femicide was penned.²³ According to the Declaration, **femicide is the murder of women and girls because of their gender.** This can include:

- 1) Killings of women by current or former intimate partners;

¹⁸For more details, see “Silenced Voices: Femicide in Armenia: 2016-2017 Report:” available at: <https://coalitionagainstviolence.am/en/publication/lrecvats-dzayner-knaspanutyuny-hayastanum/>

¹⁹Radford, Jill and Russell, Diana, eds. Femicide: the politics of woman killing. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992

²⁰Russell Diana and Jane Caputi. Femicide. Speaking the unspeakable. Ms, 1(2), (1990):34–37

²¹Radford, Jill and Diana Russell, eds. Femicide: the politics of woman killing. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992

²²Russell, D. E. H. (2001). AIDS as mass femicide: Focus on South Africa. In D. E. H. Russell & R. A. Harmes (Eds.), Femicide in global perspective. Teachers College Press.

²³Vienna Declaration on Femicide, available at: <http://www.dianarussell.com/vienna-declaration-.html>

- 2) Killings involving torture or misogynistic motives;
- 3) So-called “honor” killings of women and girls;
- 4) Targeted killings of women and girls in armed conflicts;
- 5) Killings related to dowry disputes;
- 6) Killings of women and girls due to their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- 7) Killings of indigenous and aboriginal women and girls because of their gender;
- 8) Killing of female infants and gender-based sex selection foeticide;
- 9) Deaths resulting from female genital mutilation;
- 10) Killings of women accused of witchcraft;
- 11) Killings of women and girls by organized gangs, drug dealers, human traffickers, and groups involved in the illicit arms trade, among other manifestations.

One year later, in December 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/191,²⁴ which addresses the issue of killings of women, including those perpetrated by current or former intimate partners. While the resolution uses the term “gender-related killings of women,” it also acknowledges “femicide” as an acceptable and increasingly used term – one that is already incorporated into the national legislation of several countries.

Types of femicide

According to certain theorists, **any killing of a woman**, including non-premeditated, that serves **to reinforce patriarchal control over her**, counts as femicide. This includes, for example, deaths resulting from childbirth or abortions of unprotected pregnancies,²⁵ where the underlying issue is the patriarchal system’s devaluation of women’s lives compared to men’s. As such, it either fails to create necessary conditions for women’s health and safety or imposes additional barriers that endanger their well-being.

Scholars Jill Radford and Diana Russell argue that femicide manifests in many different forms, such as: **racist femicide**, where black women are killed because of their racial identity; **homophobic femicide**, where lesbian and bisexual women are killed because of their sexual orientation; **intimate partner femicide**, committed by a current or former partner; **stranger femicide**,

²⁴Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/Crime_Resolutions/2010-2019/2013/General_Assembly/A-RES-68-191.pdf

²⁵Strengthening Understanding of Femicide: Using Research to Galvanize Action and Accountability, available at: https://media.path.org/documents/GVR_femicide_rpt.pdf

committed by someone unknown to the victim.²⁶

Besides current or former intimate partners, femicide can also be committed by:²⁷

- other family members (e.g., father, son, father-in-law);
- relatives, friends, or neighbors;
- strangers.

The link between domestic violence and femicide

Violence against women is one of the most widespread forms of discrimination and is recognized as a violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms. It most often occurs within the domestic setting and can take various forms, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. All over the world, women and girls are the primary victims of domestic violence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women globally (about 30% of all women) has experienced either physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, or sexual violence by someone else at some point in her life. Most of this violence is perpetrated by intimate partners. Globally, nearly one-third (27%) of women aged 15–49, who are in a relationship, have reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a partner at some stage in their lives. This violence can not only negatively impact a woman's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, but in some cases, it also increases the risk of HIV infection.²⁸

To prevent femicide and protect women from possible risks, state obligations play a crucial role. From this perspective, it is important that femicide cases not be viewed solely as individual crimes committed by perpetrators, but rather be treated as matters of public and state responsibility.

²⁶Radford, Jill and Russell, Diana, eds. Femicide: the politics of woman killing. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992

²⁷Russel, Diana and Harnes, Roberta, eds. Femicide in Global Perspective. New York, Teacher's College Press, 2001

²⁸More details available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women?>

FEMICIDE CASES WITH COMPLETED CRIMINAL TRIALS AND COURT VERDICTS IN FORCE

! **WARNING:** the material contains graphic scenes and descriptions of murder

Meri Movsesyan (unknown - 2021)

Husband killed Meri Movsesyan with 14 knife stabs

Background of the case²⁹

Meri Movsesyan had been married to Mher Zakaryan for about 9 years. During their marriage, they had two daughters. In June 2021, they de facto divorced and Meri moved into the apartment of her father and sisters. On August 11, 2021, at around 08:50, M. Zakaryan killed Meri in the entrance of that building.

Evidence examined during trial

Throughout the entire trial, M. Zakaryan built his testimony around the claim that he committed the murder motivated by “jealousy.” According to him, on the day of the murder, he had taken a knife from home in advance, intending to use it to threaten Meri to show him the contents of her phone messages and to find out “...who is destroying his family.”

Upon entering the building entrance, he assaulted her, held her neck with the left hand and demanded Meri’s phone and pin while holding his knife as a threat. Upon rejection, he stabbed her with the knife in his right hand multiple times, inflicting injuries incompatible with life, including “...multiple fractures of the ribs on the left, injuries of the left lung, aorta, lung artery with combined, multiple stab-and-incised wounds penetrating the pleural cavity which caused hemorrhagic traumatic shock caused by external and internal bleeding.”

Meri’s sister, as the legal successor of the victim, testified to the court that her sister had a complicated marital life. At the beginning, they did not know about the fights, and later they started noticing frequent bruises. According to the sister, the reason for the separation was that “...Mher was gambling, borrowing money, committing robberies, this marital situation was too exhausting, she couldn’t stay there any more...” The relations were tense in matters related to the children too. According to the sister, “...they were manipulating the children a lot; Mher was constantly calling and telling them to watch who the mother was speaking to, where she was, what she was doing.” **1-2 weeks before the murder**, M. Zakaryan told Meri “... **I will kill, will slaughter...**”, and **Meri reported to the police**. Both of them were invited to the police station, but the sister did not remember whether Meri had withdrawn her complaint or not.

In response to questions regarding “jealousy,” she stated that several years ago there was an incident where “...Mher retrieved phone numbers from social media, and later it was found out that one the number belonged to the aunt’s son. That was the number he was jealous of.”

.....
²⁹Court case № ԵՂ/0133/01/22.

Meri's other sister, as a witness, also confirmed the repeated instances of domestic violence in her testimony, noting: "...Throughout the entire marriage, **they always argued**. At the time of the last incident, we didn't ask what the reason was because **constant arguing and going back and forth had become normal**. ...**When she would come home, either she would return after our persuasion, or the husband would come and take her back...**"

Other witnesses who testified during the trial also reported tense relations, as well as M. Zakaryan's regular engagement in online gambling. The witnesses further mentioned that M. Zakaryan restricted Meri's interactions with her friends, controlled her phone, and subjected her to repeated physical violence. They also described that Meri attempted suicide, which, according to the testimonies, was prevented by M. Zakaryan's sister, who saw Meri and the children standing on an open windowsill at that time. It is also important to note that most of M. Zakaryan's relatives, while acknowledging in their testimonies that he regularly engaged in online gambling, denied that he had an addiction. Regarding the relationship, they did not characterize it as one "containing violence" but acknowledged the frequent scuffles and tensions. Analysis of Meri's relatives' testimonies clearly shows that **after receiving threats 1–2 weeks before the murder, Meri attempted to definitively end the cycle of violence by reporting to the police** and trying to find a lawyer who could assist her with the divorce in an affordable manner.

Court conclusion

The court, in its analysis, referred to the punishment stipulated by Article 104, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Armenia, adopted on April 18, 2003, which provides for a sentence of 8 to 15 years. It also aligned its analysis with the position expressed by the Court of Cassation of the Armenia, stating that a punishment is considered just if the court properly assesses all the circumstances of the case, all personal characteristics of the individual, and based on the requirements provided by criminal law, imposes a punishment on the person guilty of the crime that is necessary and sufficient to correct the individual and prevent the commission of new crimes by them.³⁰

When determining the sentence, the court noted as **alleviating circumstances that M. Zakaryan immediately surrendered to the police after the incident, admitted to the charges during the preliminary investigation and trial, gave confessional testimony, expressed remorse for his actions, also the fact that he was left with two dependent children under the age of 14.**

The court did not find any aggravating circumstances regarding liability and punishment.

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³⁰For more, see Court of Cassation Decision № 4P-201/07 of November 30, 2007 on Karen Harutyunyan's case.

The court concluded that M. Zakaryan is guilty of the crime stipulated in Article 104, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Armenia and should be sentenced to 8 years and 6 months of imprisonment.

The verdict was appealed to the Court of Appeal of Armenia; however, the latter reaffirmed that a just sentence was imposed, thereby rejecting the appeal and upholding the decision of the Yerevan City Court of First Instance.

Yekaterina Babenko (unknown- 2022)

Intimate partner murdered Yekaterina Babenko by strangling her

Background of the case³¹

Since 2020, Yekaterina Babenko had been living and working in Gyumri. In early 2021, she met Aleksey Peshkov, a contract soldier serving in Military Unit No. 04436 of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, stationed in Gyumri (the 102nd military base). A few months later, A. Peshkov moved into Ekaterina's apartment to live with her.

On December 23, 2022, at around 8:00 p.m., upon returning from service to Yekaterina's rented apartment, A. Peshkov demanded an explanation from her regarding the presence of strangers in the apartment earlier that day, around noon, before his return. This led to a quarrel between them and A. Peshkov murdered Yekaterina.

Evidence examined by the court

The witnesses providing testimony to the court stated that during the recent months the relations between Yekaterina and A. Peshkov had been tense. The friend who had been at their home earlier on the day of the murder stated that Yekaterina had told him that A. Peshkov “... **would often make quarrels at home..** had broken all the vodka glasses she had.” Yekaterina had said that she had paid off all of Peshkov's debts using her own earnings, amounting to approximately the equivalent of 17,000 USD. She had also noted that “**she was afraid of the guy...**”, adding that “**he might harm her**”. From the same testimony, it becomes clear that when the friend was still at her place, A. Peshkov called several times, but after answering one or two calls, Ekaterina no longer wished to speak with him. After Yekaterina hanged up, Peshkov continued calling, while Ekaterina kept turning off the calls. During this period, Yekaterina and her friend were talking and drinking together. After some time, Yekaterina asked her friend to leave so that she could go to sleep. According to the case file, shortly after her friend left, A. Peshkov arrived at Yekaterina's apartment.

During the court hearings, A. Peshkov did not admit the charges against himself, however stated that Yekaterina's death was caused by his actions for which he was sorry. According to him, on the day of the murder, Yekaterina allegedly make offensive remarks about him and hit him in the face, to which he responded with blows on various parts of her body. More specifically, “... holding Yekaterina's neck by the inner elbow of his right arm, he took the kitchen knife and inflicted stab-and-incised wounds at her neck and grasping

³¹ Court case № ԾԴ/0228/01/23.

tight at the neck, he pressed the organs within the neck and caused mechanical suffocation.”

A. Peshkov also attempted to claim that he committed the murder in a situation of necessity self-defense; however, the case materials contain no credible factual evidence indicating the presence of circumstances of necessity defense or excessiveness of such defense.

According to the forensic medical examination, Yekaterina’s death was caused by “mechanical suffocation resulting from compression of the neck organs with a blunt object (or objects).” This conclusion is supported by the presence of the following bodily injuries: “abrasions on the neck, lower left jaw, and right and left shoulder blade areas; as well as tearing of the interalveolar septa in the lungs, formation of large emphysematous foci, and signs typical of rapid death (hyperaemia in internal organs, with the blood being dark red liquid).” The examination also revealed abrasions “on the left cheek, chest, left elbow joint, right forearm, right groin, both knee joints, and right ankle joint; as well as bruises on the upper right eyelid and sclera of the eyeball, lower left jaw, right cheek, left shoulder, right subscapular region, right elbow, left thigh, and right knee joint, and beneath the scalp. There were also individual stab-incised wounds on the right and left sides of the neck. The stab-incised wounds were inflicted with a sharp-piercing instrument(s), while the other injuries resulted from the impact of blunt objects.”

Court’s Conclusion

In considering the sentence for A. Peshkov, **the court recognized his cooperation in uncovering the crime and assistance in obtaining evidence as circumstances alleviating his liability and punishment. As an aggravating circumstance, the court considered the fact that the crime was committed under the influence of alcohol.**

The court concluded that A. Peshkov was guilty of the offence stipulated under Article 155, Part 1 of the current Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia and sentenced him to 10 years of imprisonment.

Siranush Manukyan (unknown - 2022)

Former husband killed Siranush Manukyan by stabbing her

Background of the case³²

Siranush Manukyan had been married to Andranik Yeranosyan for around 19 years. During their marriage, they had two sons. In April 2022, they de facto divorced. On May 22, at around 23:00 A. Yeranosyan murdered Siranush.

Evidence examined by the court

During the main court hearings, A. Yeranosyan exercised his constitutional right to remain silent, while at the same time stating that he admitted to the charges brought against him and said that he was sorry for his actions. Both A. Yeranosyan during the pretrial proceedings, and the main witnesses during the trial, referred in their testimonies to Siranush Manukyan's relationship with another man. It is important to note that, based on the review of the case materials, the witnesses were demonstrating a stronger disapproval toward the fact that Siranush Manukyan was in a relationship with another man and refused to reunite with her husband, than toward her brutal murder. One of their sons even stated in his testimony that his father was **"...not capable"** of committing such an act, and that it was probably the **"...personal insult caused by the mother"** that drove him to it.

On May 22, 2022, Siranush returned to Gyumri and went home. Her intention was to see the children and take her clothes. When A. Yeranosyan proposed that she not go back to Yerevan and reunite, Siranush rejected the offer and left. Afterwards, A. Yeranosyan, under the influence of alcohol, called her and made the same offer. Having received another rejection and learning that Siranush would be spending the night in Gyumri at her cousin's house, he took his knife from home, took a random taxi and went to Siranush's cousin's apartment with the intention to kill her.

When knocking on the door, he pretended himself as their son. According to the testimony of the cousin, Siranush cheered up, thinking it was her son, but A. Yeranosyan forcibly entered the apartment and stabbed her with the knife inflicting "...traumatic hemorrhagic shock, eight penetrating and non-penetrating stab-and-incised wounds to the chest area, with injuries to the pericardium, heart, diaphragm, and spleen, accompanied by the development of left-sided hemothorax, hemopericardium, and hemoperitoneum; two incised wounds to the left side of the face and the lower lip area; external and internal bleeding; bodily injuries causing severe harm to health, incompatible with life." As a consequence, Siranush Manukyan died. According to the testimony of the

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³²Court case № ՇԴ/0105/01/22.

same witness, A Yerasosyan, when stabbing her, said, **“Now, die!”**

It is noteworthy that despite all of this, A. Yerasosyan gave testimony claiming that he loved his wife, had no intention to harm or kill her, and that it **“had happened under the influence of the moment”**, in a state of extreme emotional agitation, beyond his control. He added that although he had been jealous, he had not sought revenge, on the contrary, repeatedly, including on the day of the incident, wanted to “bring her back to the family.”

In regard with the afore-mentioned, a psychologist-expert who was engaged in the trial as a witness testified during the main court hearings that there were three essential stages of a psychological affect, and in A. Yerasosyan’s case, none of these three stages were achieved. Therefore, **at the time of committing the murder, he was not in** a state of extreme emotional disturbance, i.e., **a state of physiological affect.**

Court’s conclusion

The court found A. Yerasosyan guilty of committing the criminal offence stipulated under Article 104, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of Armenia, adopted on April 18, 2003; and sentenced him to 9 years of imprisonment.

The court recognized the presence of a dependent child and his voluntary surrender with a confession as alleviating factors. The court found the fact that the crime was committed under the influence of alcohol as a factor aggravating his liability and punishment.

Katya Khachatryan (1937-2023)

Son killed Katya Khachatryan by strangling her

Background of the case³³

On May 6, 2023, at around 16:00, in her apartment located in the Sevan community of Gegharkunik Province, Republic of Armenia, Katya, who was bedridden at the time, during a conversation with her son, Zaven Khachatryan expressed her concern that his wife might try to register the apartment in her own name and have everyone evicted from the apartment. During the conversation, a quarrel arose between them during which Z. Khachatryan murdered Katya Khachatryan.

Evidence examined by the court

During the court hearings, Z. Khachatryan exercised his constitutional right to remain silent and motioned for the confession he gave during the preliminary investigation, in the presence of his defense attorney, to be read aloud. According to that testimony, he admitted his guilt and confessed to committing the crime, however he refused to explain why the quarrel with his mother ended with her murder. At the same time, his testimony had contradictory information about the number of times he hit his mother, as at the beginning he mentioned 4-5 times and then he mentioned that he did not remember whether he had hit Katya at all.

A forensic medical examination confirmed that Z. Khachatryan first inflicted blows with his hands to various parts of his mother's body, "causing bodily injuries such as contusion wound on the inner surface of the lower lip; hemorrhages in the areas of the head and face, inner surfaces of the upper and lower lips, under the scalp in the frontal, right and left temporal regions, in the temporalis muscles on both sides, in the parietal-occipital regions; as well as fractures of the nasal bones." He then pressed Katya Khachatryan's neck with his hands, causing mechanical suffocation and thereby killing her. In turn, the expert witness questioned in court stated: **"...the described injuries from hand blows could only result from more than one blow."**

During the trial, the other witnesses testified that Zaven Khachatryan had been living with his mother, Katya Khachatryan, for several months. Katya had a medical condition causing vertigo and was unable to move independently and was cared for by her son and daughters. Some witnesses also reported that Zaven regularly consumed alcohol during which he usually had a calm behavior; however, when reprimanded for alcohol abuse, his behavior sharply would change and become highly aggressive. During the crime scene inspection,

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³³Court case № ԳՂ4/0072/01/23.

a bottle of vodka was found among other items, and forensic examination confirmed the presence of alcohol in his body.

Court's conclusion

The court, in its analysis of the case, addressed the nature of the criminal offence committed under Article 155, Part 2, Clause 9 of the Criminal Code of Armenia, adopted on May 5, 2021, as well as the degree of danger it poses to society, which is the particularly severe intentional crime directed against a person's life, committed within the family. At the same time, the **court considered** the social significance of the violated social relationship, the state's criminal policy, specifically **the necessity to prevent domestic violence to the maximum possible extent and impose harsher punishment for it**. The court also considered the behavior exhibited by the defendant after committing the crime, and whether there were factors alleviating and/or aggravating the defendant's liability and punishment.

When considering the issue of sentencing, the court recognized the defendant's admittance of guilt and surrender, assistance in uncovering the crime and obtaining evidence in the case as alleviating facts. As an aggravating factor, the court noted that the crime was committed under the influence of alcohol.

The court concluded that Z. Khachatryan is guilty of the crime under Article 155, Part 2, Clause 9 of the current Criminal Code of Armenia and sentenced him to 16 years of imprisonment.

The verdict was appealed to the Court of Appeal with a request to impose the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the sanction of Article 155, Part 2 of the Criminal Code. However, the Court of Cassation rejected the appeal and upheld the verdict of the Gegharkunik Regional First Instance Court.

A further appeal was filed against the decision of the Court of Cassation, which rejected the claim altogether.

Adriana Lima (1995-2023)

An acquaintance murdered Adriana Lima by stabbing her multiple times and then setting her apartment on fire

Background of the case³⁴

Adriana was a trans woman. On August 20, 2023, at around 16:30, Ernest Yenokyan murdered Adriana with multiple stabs and then set her rented apartment in Yerevan on fire.

Evidence examined by the court

During the trial, E. Yenokyan exercised his constitutional right to remain silent. He motioned to the court that his confession, given during the pre-trial investigation in the presence of his defense attorney, in which he admitted to the charges and expressed remorse, be entered into the record. E. Yenokyan built his defense around the claim that his interactions with Adriana began and were primarily influenced by drug use. According to him, Adriana "... offered using..." "crystal," which he did not turn down. He claimed that Adriana regularly used drugs and offered him a treat. Later at some point, she informed him that the drugs had to be paid for – first 10,000 AMD per use, and later increasing to allegedly 20,000 AMD.

Approximately 2-3 months before the murder, Adriana requested 400,000 AMD from him to purchase drugs in bulk. He agreed and took out a bank loan for 450,000 AMD, from which he gave her 400,000 AMD. Later on, he regularly obtained drugs from her without paying. On the day of the murder, he went to Adriana's apartment and demanded repayment of the 400,000 AMD. However, Adriana told him that "... only 100,000 AMD was left of that amount...", because he had frequently taken drugs from her without paying. At that moment, he started swearing at Adriana, while she grabbed a black-hold knife and attempted to chase him out of the apartment, however he snatched the knife out of her hand and stabbed her a few times in the region of her neck. He later set the clothes on fire in Adriana's room and took the knife, locked the door from outside and left the apartment.

According to the forensic medical examination, the following bodily injuries were found on Adriana's body: "...Multiple stab-and-incised wounds on the head, neck, chest, left wrist, and left forearm regions; penetrating stab-incised wounds in the neck and chest areas; subcutaneous hemorrhages in the head region; a defect in the occipital bone; injuries to the trachea, esophagus, pericardium, and right atrium of the heart; fractures of the 3rd and 4th ribs on the left side. All these were caused from the action of a sharp, piercing

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³⁴Court case № ԵՂ1/0255/01/24.

object (including a knife), and were inflicted while the victim was alive, shortly before death, and are classified as severe bodily harm in living individuals. They are in direct causal connection with the immediate cause of death.” Adriana’s death occurred “... as a result of hemorrhagic shock caused by the internal and external bleeding” caused by the aforementioned injuries. Additionally, “... burns of 1st and 2nd degree were discovered covering approximately 60–70% of the total body surface area in the regions of the head, face, torso, upper and lower limbs, caused by flame. These burns were inflicted immediately prior to death ... and, in this case, are not considered to be in a causal relationship with the death itself.” **Forensic chemical analysis of Adriana’s blood did not detect alcohol, drugs, or psychoactive substances.**

One of the witnesses who was a neighbor mentioned that although the apartment walls in the building are thin and sounds from the neighboring apartment are usually audible, even when Adriana turns on the vacuum cleaner, on that particular day “... **no bickering could be heard; I only heard a woman say “ah – ah” expression,**” which did not raise concern. Later, the witness noticed smoke coming out of the neighboring apartment’s window. They called Adriana’s name, but she did not respond. The witness then went to knock on the door, but no one answered, so they called the fire service.

Regarding the motive for the murder, some of the witnesses shared their assumptions that the crime may have been motivated by the fact that Adriana was a trans woman, while others stated that the motive could have been money.

It is important to note that **the victim’s identity as a trans woman was not taken into account in the legal classification of the crime. During the investigation, the motive behind the act was not addressed, nor were any circumstances examined that could serve as indicators of hate or intolerance as the grounds for the crime.** Moreover, the court, without any substantiation, and seemingly just assuming, stated that: “...E. Yenokyan did not have any hatred or negative attitude towards trans individuals, particularly towards Adriana Lima. Furthermore, E. Yenokyan and Adriana Lima were in a close relationship, which refutes the victim’s representative’s claims that the murder was committed with a motive of hatred.”

Court’s conclusion

The court found E. Yenokyan guilty under Article 155, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of Armenia and convicted to 9-year sentence. Additionally, under Article 264, Part 2, Clause 2, he was sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment. By partially combining the convictions, the final sentence was determined as 10 years of imprisonment.

In discussing the conviction, the court considered the following factors as alleviating: the defendant's assistance in obtaining evidence during the preliminary investigation; pleading guilty; giving a self-incriminating testimony during the investigation, and the fact that he has a dependent child.

The court did not find any circumstances aggravating liability and punishment.



FEMICIDE CASES WITH ONGOING OR DROPPED CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

! **WARNING:** the material contains graphic scenes and descriptions of murder

Astghik Mkrtchyan (unknown - 2022)

Former husband killed Astghik Mkrtchyan by stabbing multiple times

Background of the case³⁵

Astghik Mkrtchyan was in a de facto marital relationship with Mesrop Gevorgyan for 13 years. In the summer of 2022, they ended their relationship and began living separately. Since September 2022, M. Gevorgyan had threatened Astghik several times that he would find and kill her. At that time, she was in Masis town of Ararat marz.

On October 6, 2022, at around 05:00 AM, M. Gevorgyan, against Astghik's will, illegally broke into her apartment in Yerevan by breaking the bedroom window. In the living room, he first threatened with the folded knife he was carrying on him to kill her, then dragged her and struck her multiple times causing "a nasal bone fracture and abrasions and bruises on the nose, right cheek, and the area of the right nasolabial fold. Afterwards he stabbed her 19 times in the areas of the chest, abdomen and other parts of the body" causing life-threatening injuries "in the form of: 2 stab-and-incised, non-penetrating injuries on the anterior surface of the upper third of the right side of the neck, as well as on the anterior surface of the lower third of the right arm, 10 stab-and-incised, non-penetrating injuries on the lower posterior quadrant of the right side of the chest, anterolateral surface of the upper third of the right side of the abdomen, posterior and right posterior surfaces of the chest; as well as 2 stab-incised, penetrating wounds on the posterior surface of the right side of the chest, posterior surface of the left side of the chest, and lateral surface of the right side of the chest — accompanied by damage to the right carotid artery, pleura, peritoneum, both lungs, liver; hemothorax; internal organ hyponemia; and traumatic-hemorrhagic shock." In this particularly cruel manner, he murdered her.

Since June 5, 2023, M. Gevorgyan has been held in detention, the decision of which has been periodically extended every 3 months with the last decision's expiry stated September 6, 2025.

No further information about the committed crime is available, and the court trial of the case is not yet concluded.

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³⁵Court case № ԵՂ1/0336/01/23.

Sonik Ghambaryan (unknown - 2022)

Son killed Sonik Ghambaryan by hitting her multiple times

Background of the case³⁶

Between 2-4 November of 2022, Sonik Ghambaryan's son, Vasak Ghambaryan, struck his mother multiple times in their home located in Aghtarak community of Aragatsotn Marz and killed her.

Evidence examined by the court

On November 4, 2022, at around 13:20, relatives found Sonik unconscious and transferred her to "Ashtarak Medical Center" CJSC, where on the same day, at around 15:05, without coming back to consciousness, Sonik passed away.

According to the forensic medical examination conclusion, Sonik's death occurred due to "...brain swelling caused by a closed blunt craniocerebral trauma, as evidenced by the following injuries found during the forensic medical autopsy: contusions on the face (periorbital areas of both eyes, upper and lower eyelids, both cheeks, left half of the upper lip, left half of the lower lip, right and left parts of the chin); hemorrhages in the sclera and subconjunctival spaces of both eyeballs; hemorrhages in the left frontotemporal and left auricular areas; abrasions in the right temporozygomatic and left cheek areas, contused wounds in the nasal and right eyebrow areas; multiple subgaleal hemorrhages; hemorrhage in the left temporalis muscle; multiple hemorrhages in various regions of the brain – all caused while alive by blunt objects, possibly from repeated blows – injuries that, in a living person, are classified as severe damage to health, which caused death."

During a court hearing held in 2023, V. Ghambaryan's wife presented a copy of the official death certificate issued by the local office of the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency, confirming that V. Ghambaryan had died.

In a court hearing held in 2024, during the deliberations on whether or not to drop the criminal prosecution against the accused, the victims in the case and the accused's wife stated they had no objections to terminating the criminal prosecution against V. Ghambaryan on the grounds of his death.

Court's Conclusion

The court decided to terminate the criminal prosecution against V. Ghambaryan under Article 166, Part 2, Points 7 and 15 of the Criminal Code of Armenia, on the grounds of his death.

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³⁶Court case № ԱԲԱԴ/0015/01/23.

Varduhi Hakobyan (1967-2023)

Former husband killed Varduhi Hakobyan by hitting her multiple times

Background of the case³⁷

Varduhi Hakobyan was in a de facto marital relationship with Vardan Petrosyan. During a conversation that took place at home in April–May 2023, V. Petrosyan hit Varduhi multiple times on the head and killed her.

Then, in order to transport Varduhi’s body, he put half of her body – from head to waist – in a luggage case, however unable to move it, he covered it with a blanket, took Varduhi Hakobyan’s mobile phone, house keys, locked the house and the gates and left the scene.

Varduhi Hakobyan’s body was discovered only a year after the murder. Her sister, who lives abroad, had not received any information from Varduhi for a long time. She returned to Armenia, broke the door of her sister’s house, entered, and found her body.

Since July 24, 2024, detention has been imposed on V. Petrosyan as a preventive measure, which has been periodically extended every 2–3 months until August 22, 2025.

No further information about the committed crime is available, and the court trial of the case is not yet completed.

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³⁷Court case № ՇԴ/0073/01/25.

CASES OF FEMICIDE COMMITTED IN A STATE OF CRIMINAL IRRESPONSIBILITY

! **WARNING:** the material contains graphic scenes and descriptions of murder

Armik Grigoryan (1939 - 2022)

Sons killed Armik Grigoryan by hitting her multiple times

Background of the case³⁸

Between August 21 and 26, 2022, on an undetermined day at around 16:00, in front of the entrance of her apartment in Dilijan town, for an unknown motive, Armik Grigoryan had an argument with her sons, Karen Simonyan and Ruben Simonyan, during which the sons hit her with multiple irregular blows and killed her.

Evidence examined by the court

During the trial, the witnesses who testified mostly stated that they had little to no contact with Armik and her sons. The sons had mental health issues, and the apartment lacked basic living conditions, including a cupboards, toilet, and water supply. The statement of one of the witnesses includes the following: **“...when walking by their apartment, we heard sounds of beating...”** Another witness stated that they saw from the balcony how the sons were beating Armik, but they **“...do not remember the details...”** Another witness testified: **“...they were always arguing every day with each other; the brothers together beat and abused their mother...”** These and other witnesses tried to justify their continued inaction by the claim that K. and R. Simonyan were dangerous, and no one tried to intervene or prevent the ongoing violence.

Although none of the witnesses specified when and how they learned that Armik had been killed, on August 26 a call was received by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, which was recorded. In the recording, a person with a woman’s voice, the caller, is speaking with a male operator. The caller reports that Armik has died and that there is an **“...unbearable odor in the building...”**. No one has entered to see what happened. The caller asks for someone to come and check what has occurred. She provides the address and also mentions that **“...there are no men in the building, everyone is at work, and the women are too afraid to enter the house...”**.

Armik’s body was found on the bed in the bedroom of the apartment, lying on her back. The quick inspection showed that the abdomen and face areas of the body were swollen, showing signs of decomposition. On the same day, an autopsy was performed, confirming that: **“...death occurred more than 4 days before the time of the autopsy...”**

According to the forensic in-patient psychiatric examination conclusion, mental health issues were confirmed for R. and K. Simonyan, which were accompanied by **“...active... symptoms...”** that, both at the time of committing

³⁸Court case № SԴ/0028/01/23.

the offense and during the examination, deprived and deprive them of the ability to understand the nature, significance, and danger of their actions, to be accountable for their actions, and to control them. Therefore, they must be declared criminally irresponsible for the acts they are accused of.

Court's conclusion

The court, recognizing K. Simonyan and R. Simonyan as criminally irresponsible, who committed the act under Article 166, Part 2, Points 5, 7, and 15 of the Criminal Code of Armenia, released them of criminal liability and punishment, and imposed a forced medical measure against them – forced treatment in a psychiatric institution with general supervision.

Amalik Abovyan (1939-2023)

Relative murdered Amalik Abovyan by hitting multiple times

Background of the case³⁹

Amalik Abovyan mostly lived alone in her apartment in the Noyemberyan community. Relatives and neighbors regularly visited her and helped with household chores. On March 2, 2023, at around 14:00, Andranik Abovyan visited her and took sticks of firewood from under the stove in the living room and struck her with them murdering her.

Evidence examined by the court

On March 7, 2023, at around 00:40, Amalik Abovyan died in the intensive care unit of the “N. Nasibyan Noyemberyan Medical Center” CJSC with the diagnosis of “...craniocerebral trauma; skull contusion, and laceration of the scalp,” without coming back to consciousness.

During the trial, witnesses mostly stated that initially they assumed Amalik Abovyan had fallen and called an ambulance, but later they learned that she had actually been beaten. Upon learning this, A. Abovyan’s father suspected that his son could have done it, as he had mental health issues and had repeatedly claimed that “...Grandma Amalik is cursing him.” Days before the murder, he had gone to Amalik Abovyan’s apartment and accused her of having “...cursed him.” After that, A. Abovyan was placed for treatment in the Sevan Mental Health Center, from which he returned home days later. Talking to his father, A. Abovyan confessed that he had beaten Amalik Abovyan with the wood stick.

During the forensic examination, A. Abovyan also stated: “...I hit Amalik, she was saying evil things to me, like ‘Damn you!’ she was cursing me... she was an evil woman...” A. Abovyan was declared criminally irresponsible as a result of the examination.

Court’s conclusion

The court found that A. Abovyan committed the act under Article 155, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of Armenia in a state of criminal irresponsibility, and imposed a forced medical measure against him, that being forced treatment in a psychiatric institution with general supervision.

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³⁹Court case № ՏԴ/0163/01/23.

Silvard Kocharyan (unknown - 2023)

Relative murdered Silvard Kocharyan with particular cruelty by 38 blows

Background of the case⁴⁰

On May 19, 2023, at around 15:30, under undetermined circumstances, Armond Abdalyan murdered Silvard Kocharyan at her own apartment located in Ashtarak community by striking various parts of her body with 38 blows.

Evidence examined by the court

According to the conclusion of the outpatient forensic psychiatric commission expert, A. Abdalyan has been living with a diagnosis of “Schizophrenia” for about 20 years, which, among other symptoms, is manifested by “...insufficient ability to foresee the consequences of his own actions; lack of critical capacities, which deprived him, at the time of committing the accused act, of the capacity to understand, realize the harmfulness of his actions, and control them.” Therefore, A. Abdalyan has been declared criminally irresponsible. This has also been confirmed by a repeated inpatient forensic psychiatric examination.

Court’s conclusion

The court, recognizing A. Abdalyan as criminally irresponsible, who committed the act under Article 155, Part 2, Point 6 of the Criminal Code of Armenia, released him of criminal liability and punishment, and imposed a forced medical measure against him, that being forced treatment in a psychiatric institution with general supervision.

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⁴⁰Court case № ԱԲԸԴ/0019/01/24.



CASES OF FEMICIDE NOT IDENTIFIED IN DATALEX

! **WARNING:** the material contains graphic scenes and descriptions of murder

Zarine Meliksetyan (1991-2022)

An acquaintance murdered Zarine by stabbing with severe cruelty

Zarine lived in Pemzashen with her two children. A close acquaintance of her husband, who was abroad for work, returned to Armenia and proposed an extramarital relationship to Zarine, which she rejected.

A few days later, on November 9, 2022, around midnight (00:00), Arkadi Barseghyan and his relative Vruyr Barseghyan, having previously obtained a key adapted for unlocking the door, a nylon rope and a folding knife, drove by escaping the surveillance cameras installed in the area and waited near Zarine's house to make sure the lights were off. Using the adapted key, they broke into the house and, upon seeing Zarine, struck her on the head, which caused her lose consciousness and fall on the floor. Together, A. Barseghyan and V. Barseghyan stabbed various areas of Zarine's body.

Hearing noise, Zarine's underage daughter and son came out to the scene. Seeing the children, A. Barseghyan and V. Barseghyan tied the hands of the children and Zarine, "dragging her to the bedroom. There, in front of the children, while Zarine was still alive, they continued stabbing her with severe cruelty..." Zarine died of 11 injuries.⁴¹

Karine Meliksetyan (2010-2022)

An acquaintance murdered Karine by stabbing her after having raped her

12-year-old Karine lived in Pemzashen together with her mother and brother. Arkadi Barseghyan, a close friend of her father who was abroad for work, and Arkadi's relative Vruyr Barseghyan broke into their home on November 9, 2022, at around midnight.

They delivered 11 stabs to Karine's mother. Having murdered Karine's mother and 8-year-old brother, they raped Karine and stabbed her around the chest and abdomen with 2 strikes murdering the 12-year-old Karine.⁴²

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⁴¹Available at: https://investigative.am/news/pemzashenoum-shahaditakan-drdoumnerov-arandzin-dazhanoutyambor-ev-erkou-anchapahas-erexaneri-spanoutyan-varouyti-naxaqnnoutyounn-avartvel-e?fbclid=IwAR2wOv_xfZHURBK3Kvl7jd1BYA-IKnVxNNvuTG9ZEaxKse2YdLNOLF08frk

⁴²Available at: https://investigative.am/news/pemzashenoum-shahaditakan-drdoumnerov-arandzin-dazhanoutyambor-ev-erkou-anchapahas-erexaneri-spanoutyan-varouyti-naxaqnnoutyounn-avartvel-e?fbclid=IwAR2wOv_xfZHURBK3Kvl7jd1BYA-IKnVxNNvuTG9ZEaxKse2YdLNOLF08frk

Nelli N (1976-2022)

Former husband murdered Nelli by blowing her with a grenade

On March 11, 2022, Nelli's former husband who was stalking her, detonating Nelli with a grenade.⁴³

Tatevik Abrahamyan (1987-2022)

Husband murdered Tatevik by strangling her

On May 5, 2022, Tatevik's husband strangled her in front of their 3-year-old daughter in her apartment in Yerevan.⁴⁴

Alvard Q. (1952-2022)

Husband murdered Alvard, then chopped her body

On the night of January 26, 2022, Alvard Q.'s husband murdered her with a sharp cutting instrument and later chopped her body.⁴⁵

Unknown (1951-2022)

Husband killed his 71-year-old wife with multiple stabs

On August 18, 2022 at around 07:00, husband murdered his wife in their house in Kotayk Marz, after which he committed a suicide.⁴⁶

Yelena Sergeyeva (1999-2023)

Former intimate partner murdered Yelena and then disposed of her body

On June 15, 2023 at around 13:55, Yelena Sergeyeva's body was found in the forested area near the 2nd bend of Dilijan-Yerevan highway "... in a naked and partially devoured condition..." It was detected that Yelena's former partner murdered her not reconciling with the fact that Yelena broke up and was interacting with another man.⁴⁷

⁴³Available at: <https://www.police.am/news/view/%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%A1%D5%AF110322.html>

⁴⁴Available at: https://www.police.am/news/view/%D5%BD%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A5%D5%AC_050522.html

⁴⁵Available at: <https://www.police.am/news/view/spanut260122.html>

⁴⁶Available at: <https://hetq.am/hy/article/147441>

⁴⁷Available at: <https://iravaban.net/430150.html>

Unknown (1930-2023)

Co-villager murdered a 93-year-old woman by delivering multiple blows and then sexually abusing her

On December 1, 2023, Stepanavan Medical Center reported to the police that the ambulance brigade "... found a woman in her apartment dead with blood on her head..." The investigation detected that a 24-year-old co-villager broke into her home, delivered multiple blows to her and taking advantage of her helpless state, he sexually abused her.⁴⁸

Gayane K. (1959-2024)

Son murdered Gayane by stabbing her

On August 15, 2024 at around 9.50, "... 65-year-old Gayane K.'s body..." was found in her apartment in Yerevan. It was detected that at around 8.55 "her 25-year-old son living at the same address murdered her with a sharp cutting instrument..."⁴⁹

Unknown (1952-2024)

Son murdered 72-year-old woman by hitting her multiple times

On October 27, 2024 at around 23:00, "... a 72-year-old woman's body was found in a completely defaced state, as well as a metal stick was found nearby with stains of blood..." in the living room of a Yerevan-based apartment. It was found out that the woman was murdered by her son.⁵⁰

Unknown (1951-2024)

Son murdered 73-year-old woman by pushing and causing injuries

On February 29, 2024 at around 16:00, "... a woman's body was found on the bed with injuries on the head, an open rupture on the forehead blood-like stains..." in an apartment in Yerevan. It was found out that the woman was murdered by her son.⁵¹

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⁴⁸Available at: <https://www.hetq.am/hy/article/165833>

⁴⁹Available at: <https://factor.am/801653.html>

⁵⁰Available at: <https://iravaban.net/498821.html>

⁵¹Available at: <https://www.hetq.am/hy/article/164717>

CONCLUSION

When studying femicide cases, it is crucial not only to identify the individual cases but also to put into the spotlight the system that encourages such murders and makes violence perpetual.

The absence of clear procedures for femicide cases, the qualification of femicide in terms other than femicide, and the soft attitude toward perpetrators of violence contribute to the perpetuity of these abuses and the creation of an atmosphere of impunity.

In this sense, it is important to discuss the systemic problems identified in the report, which are not unique and have been highlighted in periodic reports on femicide for about 10 years.

Perpetual neglect

Years of studying femicide cases show that when examining femicide cases, the courts of the Republic of Armenia generally continue to **overlook**:

- **background of the crime,**
- **motive for the crime,**
- **degree of danger posed to society.**

The studied verdicts indicate that when investigating femicide cases, **courts do not consider the recurring nature of the violence against the victims**, even though the majority of witnesses involved in the cases point to the ongoing pattern of abuse carried out by the perpetrator. This has been documented in the femicide reports for 2016-2017, 2018-2021, and in this report as well. An example of this is the case of Meri Movsesyan, who had been regularly subjected to violence and had filed a police report at least two weeks before the murder, but no effective action was taken to prevent her death.

In this regard, it is important to highlight the precedent set by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of “Opuz v. Turkey”,⁵² where the court recognized that the state must be held accountable in all cases where it fails to protect women from domestic violence. The rulings in “Opuz v. Turkey” and later “Kontrová v. Slovakia”⁵³ served as the basis for the European Court to recognize violence against women as a systemic issue that reflects the

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⁵²ECHR, *Opuz v. Turkey*, available at: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf/?library=ECHR&id=001-92945&filename=001-92945.pdf>

⁵³ECHR, *Kontrová v. Slovakia*, available at: https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/resources/Kontrova%20v.%20Slovakia_en.asp

unequal distribution of power. In these cases, the European Court placed the responsibility for protecting women from domestic violence on the state. Later, in the cases of “Tkhikhelidze v. Georgia”⁵⁴ and “Khachatryan v. Armenia”,⁵⁵ the court reaffirmed its stance and noted that the state failed to meet its obligations to prevent foreseeable harm.

Criminal regulations

The 2003 Criminal Code was not gender-sensitive and lacked comprehensive regulations regarding domestic violence. As a result, the acts of femicide were mainly treated as general criminal offenses, without being analyzed in light of the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim or the dynamics of power and control within those relationships. This legislative gap is noticeable in the handling of both the Meri Movsesyan and Siranush Manukyan cases and the sentencing for these crimes: 8 years and 6 months of imprisonment for Meri’s murder, and 9 years for Siranush’s murder.

Although the 2021 Criminal Code marked significant progress, key issues remained unresolved. Domestic violence was not distinguished as a separate offense in the Criminal Code. However, articles specifying liability for various types of violence were amended to include an aggravating circumstance, implying a harsher penalty for crimes committed by close relatives. **This gave the impression that certain forms of domestic violence were criminalized.** In this regard, it is important to note that the definition of “close relative” did not encompass an intimate partner, so there were no specific provisions for cases where the crime was committed by an intimate partner. It is crucial to emphasize that, **in the context of domestic violence, the act of violence should be legally qualified in the same way, regardless of whether the crime was committed by a former or current spouse or intimate partner.**

In practice, however, the Criminal Code followed a different logic, which became evident in the case of Yekaterina Babenko. Yekaterina’s murder, which was a femicide committed by her intimate partner, was not given such a legal qualification and was classified as an “ordinary murder” because, according to the Criminal Code, an intimate partner was not included in the definition of “close relative,” and there were no specific regulations for crimes committed by intimate partners. Consequently, acts of violence within intimate relationships were neither appropriately recognized legally nor required protection. This created a highly concerning situation, especially regarding the protection of the rights of individuals in same-sex and/or non-heteronormative relationships.

⁵⁴ECHR, Tkhikhelidze v. Georgia, available at: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-210854>

⁵⁵ECHR, Khachatryan v. Armenia, available at: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-238376>

As a result of the legislative changes made in 2024, the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Persons Subject to Domestic and Family Violence⁵⁶ established that an intimate partner is a person with whom there is a relationship characterized by a romantic bond, regardless of cohabitation or sexual relations. At the same time, corresponding amendments were made to the existing Criminal Code, including provisions for cases where a crime is committed by an intimate partner or former partner. This regulation can be regarded as a sectoral reform; however, key issues continue to remain unresolved. **Femicide continues to lack recognition as a separate offense in the current criminal code.** Regarding **domestic violence**, it continues to be **unclassified as a separate offense** that would highlight the specific characteristics of the crime and provide for more severe punishment and a different liability logic. Instead, the legislation has been developed under the philosophy that articles prescribing responsibility for the main types of violence are supplemented by an aggravating circumstance, implying harsher punishment for crimes committed by close relatives, intimate partners, or former partners.

Aggravating and alleviating circumstances

Examination of judicial cases shows that **in femicide cases, courts often fail to identify circumstances aggravating the liability and punishment**, as seen in cases like those of Adriana Lima or Meri Movsesyan. Whereas, in femicide cases that contain clear elements of gender-based violence, courts have considered circumstances that **alleviate liability and punishment, such as surrender to the police immediately after the crime pleading guilty; admitting to the charges during the investigation and trial; giving confessional testimony; expressing remorse and having dependent children under the age of 14.**

It is important to note that the court is bound by the aggravating circumstances outlined in criminal legislation and cannot impose additional aggravating circumstances beyond those prescribed by domestic law. At the same time, the court is not restricted from considering other mitigating circumstances not foreseen by law for any criminal case.

This kind of regulations and practices can be applied to any criminal case, but their mechanical application in cases of gender-based violence directly contradicts the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Convention),⁵⁷ which Armenia

⁵⁶Available at: <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/208514/latest>

⁵⁷Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680462533>

signed on January 18, 2018.⁵⁸

Article 46 of the Convention calls on states to ensure that, when delivering judgments on crimes covered by the Convention, **certain aggravating circumstances are taken into account, including:**

- a) The offence was committed against a former or current spouse or intimate partner, as defined by domestic law, by a family member, someone cohabitating with the victim, or by a person who abused their authority over the victim.
- b) The offence or similar offences were committed repeatedly.
- c) The offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by certain circumstances.
- d) The offence was committed against a child or in the presence of a child.
- e) The offence was committed by two or more persons acting together.
- f) The offence was preceded or was accompanied by extreme levels of violence.
- g) The offence was committed with the use of or threat of a weapon.
- h) The offence resulted in a serious physical or psychological harm for the victim.
- i) The perpetrator had previously been convicted for similar offences.

Analysis of Armenia's Criminal Code provisions regarding aggravating circumstances in the context of the Convention's provisions allows us to state that Article 71 of Armenia's Criminal Code, which prescribes aggravating circumstances, does not include the following:

- commission of the offence or similar offences repeatedly,
- commission of the offence against a spouse or intimate partner, another family member or cohabitant,
- commission of the offence resulted in serious physical or psychological harm for the victim.

All other aggravating circumstances outlined in the Armenian Criminal Code correspond to the requirements of the Convention.

In legal literature, when addressing the need to establish aggravating circumstances in domestic violence cases, it is often argued that it is justifiable by the fact that offences committed by individuals who are not family members or intimate partners cause less suffering to the victim.

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⁵⁸Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures>

To ensure the effective legislative framework for the prevention of violence against women, protection of victims, and criminal prosecution of perpetrators, it is necessary to have comprehensive provisions in the criminal legislation that address all forms of violence based on sex/gender, with particular attention to cases of gender-based violence.

The system's response to the murder of a trans woman

Murders of trans women, even when accompanied by clear signs of hatred, are often not qualified as hate crimes. This is due both to the lack of clear legal regulations and to the insufficient and biased investigation by the law enforcement bodies. To this view, Adriana's murder case once again confirmed the serious issues within the law enforcement system. **When qualifying the crime, the fact that the victim was a trans woman was not taken into account. During the investigation, the motive for the crime was not addressed, and even the circumstances that could indicate hate or intolerance as the underlying cause of the crime were not discussed.**

It is also extremely worrying that in the verdict, Adriana's name is either repeatedly replaced or referred to by another name (deadnaming), which is a direct sign of disregard for her gender identity and is considered a discriminatory and harmful practice.

On the vocabulary practiced by the legal system

As in previous reports, **the study of court verdicts within this report shows that even when describing the clear fact of commission of violence, the corresponding acts are not qualified as violence against women.** Instead, in court verdicts, the violent offences are described using euphemism such as: "argument," "scuffle," or "tension."

It is extremely worrisome that, both in law enforcement reports and in court verdicts, as well as in materials published by media outlets, the phrase "...had a sexual relation..." is used when describing obvious forms of sexual abuse. **It is unacceptable to use the phrase "...had a sexual relation..." in situations where the person was abused or was threatened with an abuse involving transgression of their bodily integrity.** In such situations, the use of the phrase "...had sexual relations..." changes the perception of the offence committed and reduces its severity.

There is a particular pattern, seen both in previous reports and in this one,

where “**jealousy**” and “**morality**” are used as alleviating factors for serious offences, while such factors are not prescribed by law. Phrases like “...on the grounds of jealousy...” or “...suspecting infidelity...” contain an indirect blame against the murdered women while simultaneously offering an excuse for the perpetrators.

The failure to describe the committed offences may also hint at possible flaws in the legal qualification of these crimes, which ignore the root causes of the committed offences and refuse to address them within the context of power, control, and structural violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKING

In order to prevent violence against women, gender-based violence, and femicide, and to eradicate the atmosphere of impunity, the Republic of Armenia must adopt appropriate, effective legal frameworks and ensure their proper implementation.

The Republic of Armenia must ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and must align its existing legislation with the requirements of the Convention.

Before the ratification of the Convention, it is necessary to make amendments and additions to the Armenian Criminal Code. Specifically:

- 1) Prescribe femicide as a separate criminal offense in the Armenian Criminal Code.**
- 2) Amend Article 71, Part 1 of the Armenian Criminal Code to include the following aggravating circumstances:**
 - 1.1.** Commission of domestic violence as a circumstance aggravating liability and punishment.
 - 1.2.** Commission of any form of violence based on gender as a circumstance aggravating liability and punishment.
 - 1.3.** Crimes committed against a spouse, partner, other family members, or cohabitants as a circumstance aggravating liability and punishment.
 - 1.4.** The repeated commission of the offence or similar offences as a circumstance aggravating liability and punishment.
 - 1.5.** Infliction of serious physical or psychological harm on the victim as a circumstance aggravating liability and punishment.
- 3) Amend Armenia's Criminal Code to restrict the possibility of applying amnesty in cases of gender-based violence.**

In addition to legislative changes, the following activities are necessary:

- 1)** Regularly organize mandatory trainings for relevant specialists (judges, prosecutors, investigators, etc.) on how to present information regarding femicide and transgender persons using appropriate vocabulary and respectful attitude, as well as on international standards regarding gender-based violence. Special attention should be given to eradicating existing stereotypes about violence against women and ensuring that no specialists

with such stereotypes are present within the law enforcement system.

- 2)** Regularly develop and implement activities aimed at preventing gender-based violence and raising public awareness.

APPENDIX 1. QUANTITATIVE DATA

CAUSES OF DEATH IN FEMICIDE CASES

Use of stabbing-incising instruments (including knives)	11
Beating (including by the use of blunt objects)	5
Strangling	4
Explosion (grenade)	1
Pushing/mechanical harm	1

STATUS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ABUSER

Husband/former husband	6
Son	6
Intimate partner/person in a de facto marital relationship	4
Acquaintance	4
Relative	2

FEMICIDE ACROSS ARMENIA

Yerevan	8
Shirak	5
Tavush	3
Lori	2
Aragatsotn	2
Gegharkunik	1
Kotayk	1

WHERE THE WOMEN WERE MURDERED

Home	18
Outdoors	2
Relative's home	1
Entrance of home	1

SENTENCES

Unknown	13
Forced treatment	3
Imprisonment under 10 years	2
Imprisonment for 10 years	2
Imprisonment above 10 years	1
Criminal cases dropped due to the death of the defendant	1

APPENDIX 2. KEY CONCEPTS

- **Gender**

A social and cultural construct that defines what expectations, roles, and behaviors are assigned to an individual based on their perceived sex. It is socially learned and alters under the influence of time, culture, and power systems.

- **Gender Discrimination**

Any differentiation, exclusion, or preference that restricts or denies the rights and interests of individuals based on gender-based prejudices, stereotypes, and actual sex/gender that leads to or results in gender inequality in political, economic, social, cultural, or public life for women, men, or non-binary individuals.

- **Direct Gender Discrimination**

Discrimination that directly targets gender identity.

- **Indirect Gender Discrimination**

Discrimination that occurs without directly targeting gender identity.

- **Gender Equality**

The existence of conditions and opportunities free from gender-based discrimination, implying equal treatment in society.

- **Gender-Based Violence**

Violence that arises from expectations of gender roles and the unequal distribution of power in existing relationships.

- **Domestic Violence**

All forms of physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence within a family, or between former or current spouses and/or intimate partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator cohabitated with the victim or not.

- **Discrimination**

Differentiated treatment of individuals based on one of the protected grounds (sex, gender, age, faith, health status, disability, economic status, etc.) without any objective reason or reasonable justification, meaning that the means do not pursue a lawful end and there is no reasonable proportionality between the means and the pursued lawful end.

- **Indirect Discrimination**

A seemingly neutral law, policy, condition, action, standard, or practice that, when applied, restricts the rights of certain groups based on one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination, putting them in a disadvantaged position compared to others.

- **Direct Discrimination**

Decisions, acts, or omissions aimed at restricting the rights and interests of an individual or group of individuals based on specific characteristics, resulting in inequality in any area of life.

- **Femicide**

The murder of women and girls based on their gender, driven by gender inequality to impose patriarchal authority and control over their lives and bodies.

- **Patriarchy**

A form of social organization where predominantly men hold the political power and moral authority. Patriarchy is characterized by the institute of male power and privileges, while women are subordinated and have an inferior status.

- **Sexism**

A term that describes the presumed dominance of men over women. Sexism is expressed at all the levels in a patriarchal society.

- **Feminism**

A political and social movement and ideology that aims for equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in society. Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression, which also includes the recognition of systemic sexism.

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