



Guatemala Human Rights Commission / USA

Fact Sheet

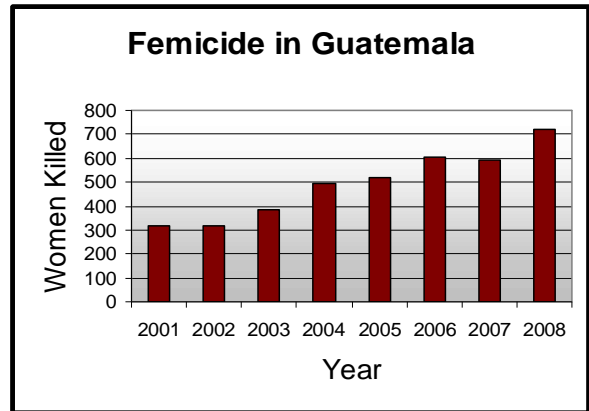
Femicide and Feminicide

Femicide

- Femicide is not simply the murder of females but rather the killing of females by males because they are female.
- It is a form of terrorism that functions to define gender lines, enact and bolster male dominance, and to render women chronically and profoundly unsafe.
- Femicide occurs throughout the world – China, India, Middle East, Africa, Latin America
- Approximately 40% of violent deaths of women in Guatemala take place in Guatemala City.

Statistics on femicide in Guatemala according to the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office:

Year	Number of Women Killed
2001	317
2002	317
2003	383
2004	497
2005	517
2006	603
2007	590
2008	722
Total:	3,946



Famous Case: Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz

- Claudina Isabel Velásquez went to a party in Guatemala City, where she lived with her family. The next day, her body was found abandoned on a city street. Because of her father's quest for justice, her story is known internationally (*Killer's Paradise*, BBC, 2006).
- To date, her case remains unresolved because of the authorities':
 - Failure to promptly open an investigation
 - Failure to preserve the crime scene
 - Failure to collect evidence from the crime scene
 - Failure to perform adequate forensic tests and analysis
 - Failure to interview witnesses
 - Frequent rotation of investigators
 - Re-victimization and harassment of victim's family



Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz

Feminicide

- Feminicide is a political term. It encompasses more than femicide because it holds responsible not only the male perpetrators but also the state and judicial structures that normalize misogyny.
- Feminicide connotes not only the murder of women by men because they are women but also indicates state responsibility for these murders whether through the commission of the actual killing, toleration of the perpetrators' acts of violence, or omission of state responsibility to ensure the safety of its female citizens.
- In Guatemala, feminicide is a crime that exists because of the absence of guarantees to protect the rights of women.

Additional Femicide Statistics



- Between January 1st and 4th, 2009, 487 women requested aid and/or protection from Institute of Public Defense because of beatings, insults, and death threats (*Prensa Libre* 1/26/09).
- In January 2009, 28 women were violently murdered.
- El Organismo Judicial documented approximately 39,000 cases of intrafamily violence (physical, psychological, and sexual) between January and September 2008.
- A study conducted by la Comisión Nacional para la Prevención de la Violencia Intrafamiliar (CONAPREVI) found that people view abuse as something natural and believe that it is caused by alcoholism, drug addiction, and unemployment.
- The most serious abuses against women take place in rural areas, where the women do not know their rights and essentially become the property of their spouses.

Norma Cruz, recipient of the 2009 “Women of Courage” Award, granted by the US Department of State

Norma Cruz and the Survivor’s Foundation

- Norma Cruz is the founder and director of the Survivor’s Foundation, an organization supporting victims of femicide.
- Objectives:
 - Accompany victims of femicide in their search for justice and legal support.
 - Contribute to bettering physical, psychological, and social recovery through the provision of social services.
 - Safeguard the life and physical integrity of victims and their families by providing a refuge house.
 - Strengthen institutions that investigate and prosecute femicide crimes.
 - Support those that break the cycle of dependence and begin a new dynamic in which women live with dignity.



“What continues to kill us is impunity.”

-Sandra Moran, Director, Sector de Mujeres

Femicide Law

- GHRC and a network of NGOs in DC pushed through a resolution on femicide in the US House of Representatives and Senate.
- House Resolution 100 passed on May 1st, 2007 and Senate Resolution 178 passed on March 11th, 2008.
- This pressured the Guatemalan government to act. Laws against femicide and other forms of violence against women passed on April 9th, 2008.
- Under the Femicide Law, 11 cases have been tried as of February 25th, 2009.
- There has been only one conviction under the Femicide Law:



- Calixto Simón Cum received 5 years in prison for beating his partner Vilma Angélica de La Cruz Marroquín.
- De La Cruz lived with Cum for three years. During that time he raped and beat her regularly. He threatened to kill her and her four children if she left him.
- Survivor’s Foundation helped De La Cruz to denounce her partner, leading to his incarceration.