



# Guatemala Human Rights Commission / USA

## Fact Sheet

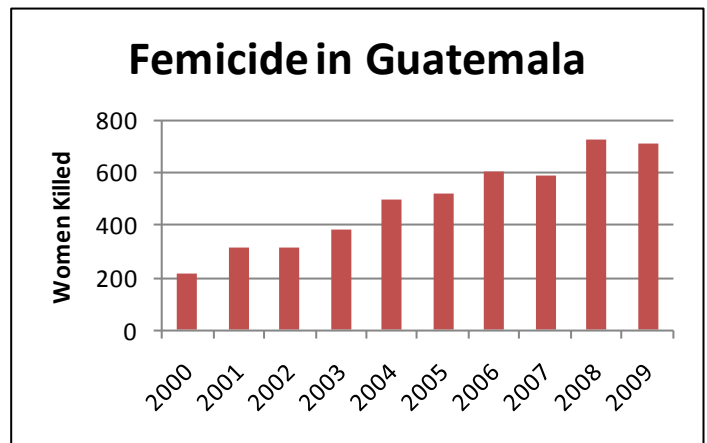
### Femicide and Feminicide

#### Femicide:

- The murder of a woman because of her gender.
- A form of terrorism that functions to define gender lines, enact and bolster male dominance, and render women chronically and profoundly unsafe.
- Femicide occurs throughout the world – China, India, Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.
- 99% of femicide cases in Guatemala remain in impunity.

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

Year	Number of Women Killed
2000	213
2001	317
2002	317
2003	383
2004	497
2005	517
2006	603
2007	590
2008	722
2009	708
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,867</b>



#### 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 reinforce misogyny.
- State responsibility for the crime includes the commission of the actual killing, toleration of the perpetrators’ acts of violence, or inability to guarantee the rights and ensure the safety of its female citizens.

## Additional Femicide Statistics

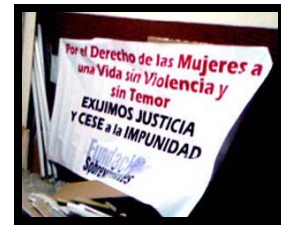


- Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 487 women requested aid and/or protection from Institute of Public Defense because of beatings, insults, and death threats (*Prensa Libre* 1/26/09).
- In January 2009, 28 women were violently murdered.
- The Guatemalan Judicial Organism documented approximately 39,000 cases of intra-family violence (physical, psychological, and sexual) between January and September 2008.
- A study conducted by the National Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (CONAPREVI) found that abuse is perceived 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.
- 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.
- The first conviction under the Femicide Law in February 2009:



- 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.