

Guatemala Human Rights Commission / USA

Fact Sheet

Femicide and Femicide



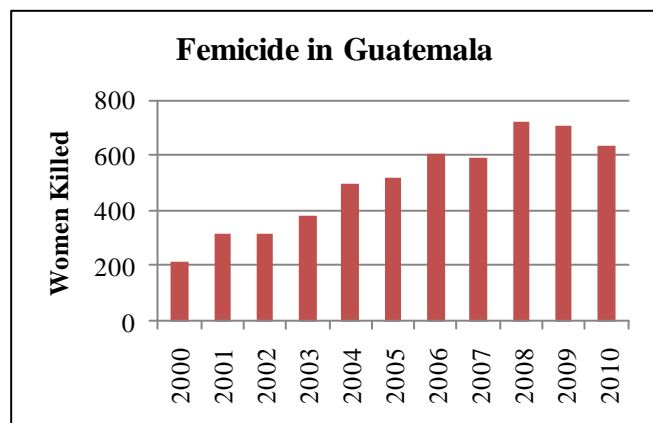
Femicide

- 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.
- Occurs throughout the world – China, India, Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.
- 99% of femicide cases in Guatemala remain in impunity.

Femicide

- Femicide 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 acts of violence, or inability to guarantee the rights and safety of its female citizens.

Year	Number of women killed (femicide)
2000	213
2001	317
2002	317
2003	383
2004	497
2005	517
2006	603
2007	590
2008	722
2009	708
2010	633
Total:	5,500



Source: Human Rights Ombudsman's Office

Why Femicide Cases Remain Unsolved

- The vast majority of femicide cases in Guatemala go unsolved because of the authorities':
 - Failure to promptly open investigations
 - Failure to preserve crime scenes and collect evidence
 - Failure to perform adequate forensic tests and analyses
 - Failure to interview key witnesses, pursue leads or make timely arrests
 - Frequent rotation of investigators on cases and lack of prioritization of femicide
 - Re-victimization and harassment of victims' families
 - Gender bias in state institutions, from police to judges

Guatemala's Femicide Law

- GHRC and a network of NGOs in DC worked to pass the following femicide resolutions in the US Congress: House Resolution 100 passed on May 1, 2007, and Senate Resolution 178 passed on March 11, 2008.
- These resolutions put pressure on the Guatemalan government to enact similar legislation. The Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women passed in Guatemala on April 9, 2008.
- See GHRC's report entitled "Guatemala's Femicide Law: Progress Against Impunity,"



Femicide

which can be found at <http://www.ghrc-usa.org> under Publications.

- As a result of these new laws, the Survivor's Foundation has brought many cases to court in Guatemala, resulting in 106 civil and penal sentences in 2010.
- While the law is imperfect and the implementation process has been slow, it is a positive step for Guatemalan women.
- 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 3 years. During that time he raped and beat her regularly. He threatened to kill her and her 4 children if she left him.
 - Survivor's Foundation helped De La Cruz denounce her partner, leading to his incarceration.

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.
- The objectives of the Survivor's Foundation include:
 - 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 precedent in which women live with integrity.
- Norma Cruz received the 2009 International Women of Courage Award from the US Department of State.



One Tragic Example of Violence Against Women in Guatemala:

Mindy Rodas Donis

- Mindy Rodas Donis was 21 years old when her husband brutally beat her on July 3, 2009. She had requested financial support for her son when her husband used a rock and a machete to violently disfigure her face and leave her body along a riverbed.
- Mindy survived the attack and sought assistance from the Survivor's Foundation. Her husband was incarcerated and, thanks to the Survivor Foundation's interventions, was charged with attempted femicide. His trial date was set for June 16, 2011.
- The Survivor's Foundation provided psychological support services to Mindy and helped arrange for facial reconstructive surgery. Mindy chose to seek treatment in Mexico in January 2010. However, she continued to suffer from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of her husband's attack and her facial disfigurement. Mindy returned to Guatemala without completing the reconstructive treatment.
- After staying at the Survivor's Foundation's refuge house for several months, Mindy chose to return to her home in June 2010. She remained in contact with the Survivor's Foundation and was in the process of writing an account of her story to share with other victims of violence. On December 17, 2010, Mindy went missing. One month later, her body was identified at a morgue in the nation's capital. It is still unknown why she was in the capital. A police report showed that her body was found on the morning of December 18, 2010. (www.sobrevivientes.org, 1/22/11).

