

# **COSTA RICA**

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE LIFE CYCLE, 2021**

- Preliminary considerations
- Progress and challenges
- The Continuum of violence:
  - Intrafamily violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Femicide



# PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

## Concepts and analytical approach

### Violence against Women

Violence against women is "any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere."

Source: Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. (Belém do Pará), 1994.

### Continuum of violence

It refers to an unrelenting and continuous violence in women's lives, where their lives seem to run in a continuum where the norm and pattern is violence against them, always and everywhere.

Source: UNDP and USAID, 2016.

The Continuum of Violence Against Women: **a matter of citizen security and a human rights issue**



**Why is it urgent to generate robust evidence of violence against women?**

**1.**

It is the result of a system based on **unequal power relations** between men and women.

**2.**

Exposure to a series of **specific risks** and other forms of **discrimination and social exclusion** leads to high and multiple vulnerability.

**3.**

There is urgent need for **gender-sensitive indicators**, in order to characterize this situation, and design effective **public policies**.

## PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES Legal framework, information management and victimization

### Legal Framework Timeline

© 2021

**Law 9975** Reform to the Criminalization of Violence against Women Law to broaden the concept of femicide to include any partner or type of relationship, even after divorce, separation or breakup.

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**Law 9.877** Law Against Street Sexual Harassment (free sexual harassment in life and when traveling)

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**Law 9.406** Law on Improper Relations (This law seeks to strengthen the legal and administrative protection of the rights of adolescents in situations of gender-based violence associated with abusive relationships).

© 2012

**Law 9.095 - Law Against Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Costa Rica.** The purpose of this law is to promote public policies to combat Human Trafficking.

© 2011

**Law 8.929** Reform to the Law Criminalizing Violence against Women.  
**Law 8. 925** Law against Domestic Violence.

© 2010

**Law 8.805** Reform of the Law Against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Education.

© 2008

**Law 8.688** Creation of the National System for the attention and prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.

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**Law 8.589** Criminalization of violence against women.  
**Legislative Decree 8.589** Criminalization of violence against women.

© 1996

**Law 7.586** Against domestic violence.

© 1995

**Law 7.499** Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.  
**Law 7.446** Reform of the Law Against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Education.

© 1990

**Law 7.142** Promotion of women's social equality.

© 1984

**Law 6.968** Approved Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**5 information gaps for the visibility of violence against women throughout the life cycle**

**1.**  
Limited or no information on certain offenses

**2.**  
Data not recorded

**3.**  
Inconsistencies

**4.**  
Data not updated

**5.**  
Difficulties comparing with other countries

## THE CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE A differentiated analysis of incidence of crime

### CONTINUUM DE VIOLENCE FOR WOMEN AND MEN

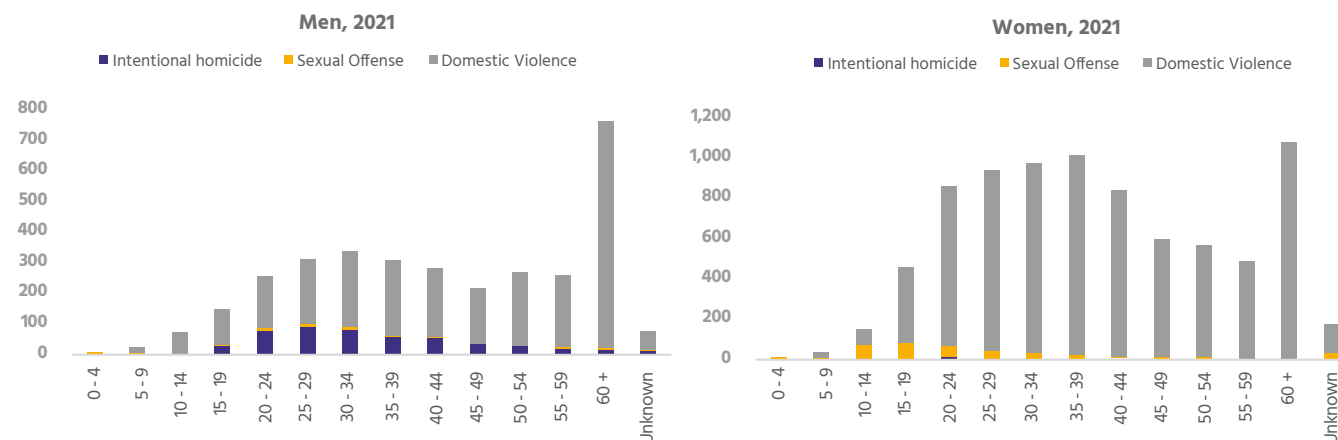
Homicides, sexual offenses and domestic violence

- **Women and men affected by violence differently**  
Women are primary victims of sexual offenses and domestic violence, while men are primary victims of homicide.

#### Domestic violence

This is any situation involving physical, psychological, sexual or property abuse in which the individual who carries out the act of violence has a relationship of consanguinity, affinity or adoption with the assaulted person. Since 1996, Costa Rica has the Law against Domestic Violence, an instrument to request protection measures to guarantee life, integrity and dignity.

Source: Observatory on Gender-Based Violence against Women and Access to Justice.



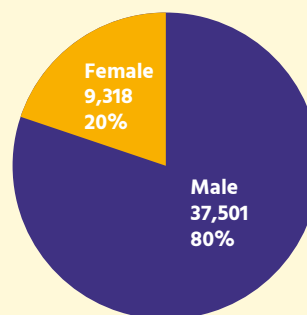
Source: Judicial Investigation Department and Ministry of Public Security, 2021.

### Protection orders for domestic violence

Women are the primary victims of domestic violence in Costa Rica

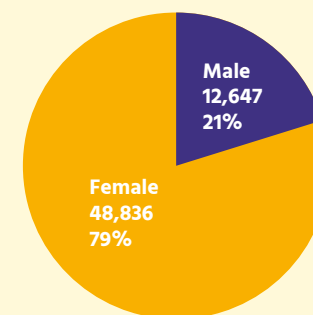
**Absolute and percentage distribution of the number of protection measures by sex of alleged aggressors and alleged victims, 2020**

- **4 in 5 aggressors were male**



Alleged perpetrators

- **8 in 10 victims of this crime were female**

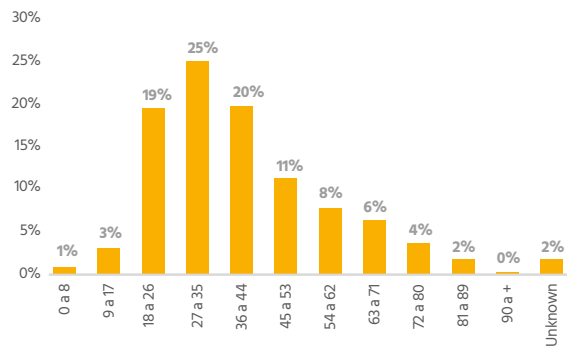


Alleged victims

## ► Violence against Women starts in the early stages of life, inside the household

25% of reports were filed by females ages 27 to 35.

Percentage of people who are alleged victims of domestic violence by sex according to age range, 2020



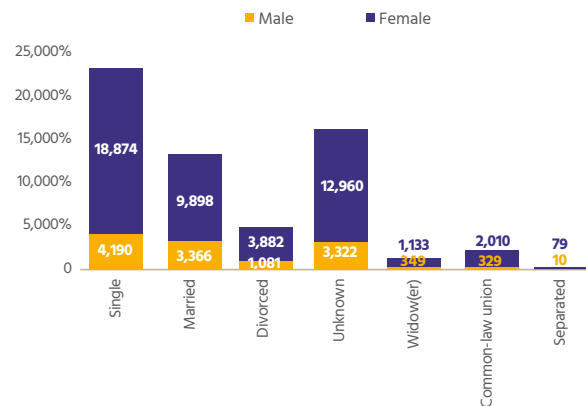
Source: Prepared by the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess at the Justice Sector Planning Department

## ► Single women are the most vulnerable to intrafamily violence

In 2020 48,836 women requested protection orders, as a result of being alleged victims of domestic violence.

4 in 10 cases reported women were single.

Number people who are alleged victims of domestic violence, by marital status and sex, 2020



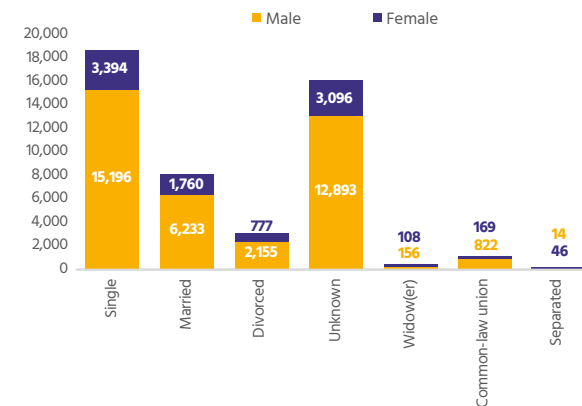
Source: Prepared by the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess at the Justice Sector Planning Department

## ► The alleged perpetrators of domestic violence are single men

In 2020 37,501 men were registered as alleged perpetrators of domestic violence.

4 in 10 alleged male perpetrators were single.

Number people who are alleged victims of domestic violence, by marital status and sex, 2020



Source: Prepared by the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess at the Justice Sector Planning Department

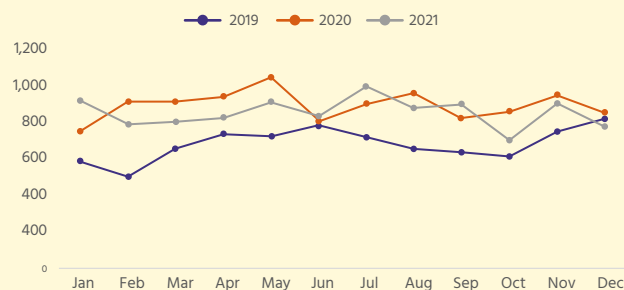
# Victims of domestic violence

## ► Domestic Violence has not returned to pre pandemic levels

In 2019, pre-pandemic, records showed, on average, 696 victims per month.

In 2021, on average there were 858 victims per month.

Number of victims of the law against domestic violence by year and month of occurrence, 2019-2021

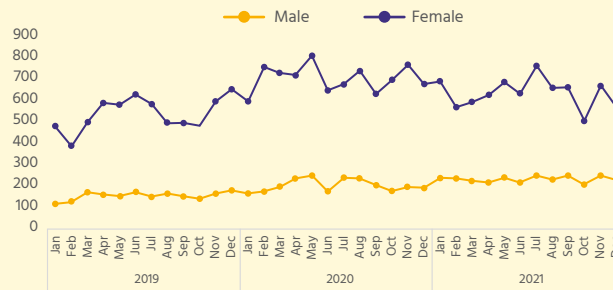


Note: This includes people charged as per Ministry of Public Security.

## ► The greatest proportion of victims of domestic violence were female

In 2021, 7 in 10 victims were female, and 3 in 10 were male.

Number of victims of the Law against Domestic Violence by year and month of occurrence, by victim sex, 2019-2021

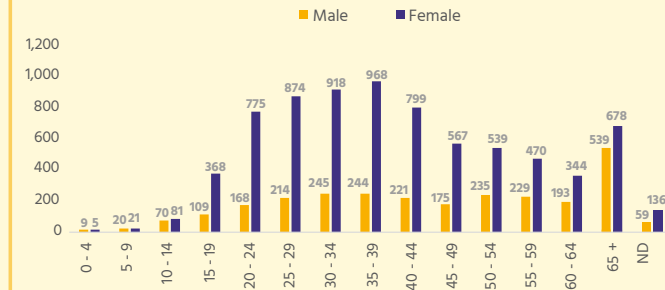


Note: This includes people charged as per Ministry of Public Security.

## ► The majority of victims of domestic violence were young women

1 in 3 victims were women ages 20 to 39.

Number of victims of the Law against Domestic Violence by age and by victim sex, 2021



Note: This includes people charged as per Ministry of Public Security.

## Sexual violence

Sexual violence is defined as: "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work."

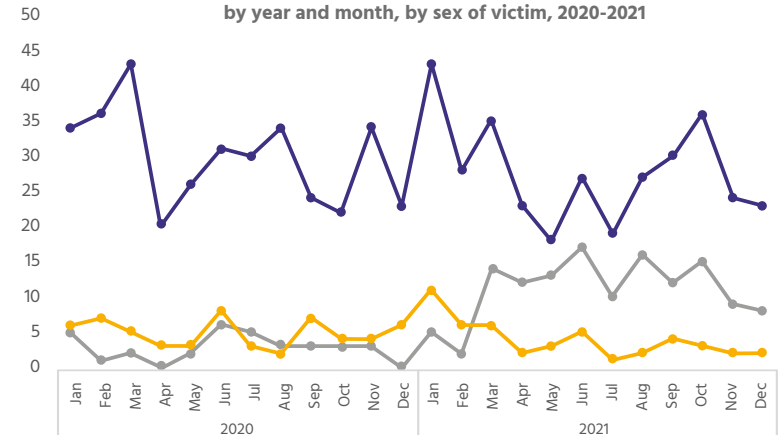
Source: WHO, 2013.

### ► Of the total reported instances of rape, the majority of victims were women

In 2021, there were 333 sexual crimes registered where the victims were female, and 47 where the victims were male, the majority, that is, 65% of the victims were female.

Unknown  
Male  
Female

Number of sexual crimes registered in Costa Rica by year and month, by sex of victim, 2020-2021



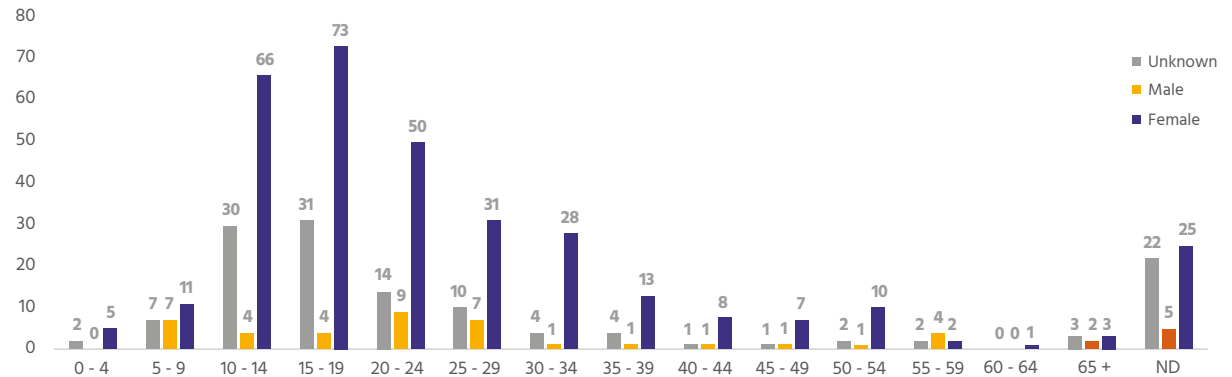
Source: Judicial Investigation Department.

### ► The main targets of sexual crimes are women ages 10 to 24

37% of victims were women ages 10 to 24.

In the case of men, the highest registered numbers of complaints for sexual crimes was between 20 and 29 years of age, that is 3% of the total sexual crimes reported in 2021.

Number of sexual crimes registered in Costa Rica by sex and age of victim, 2021



Source: Judicial Investigation Department.

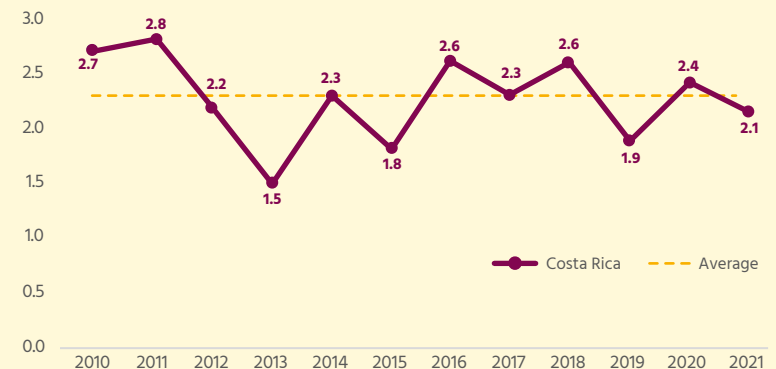
## Femicide

This is the most serious gender-based violence, involving the murder of a woman because of her status as a woman, usually at the hand of a present or former partner, or another man with whom she has no relationship or is no longer in a partner relationship. This is not common homicide, but the product, normally, of escalating violence, and an unequal relationship between the woman and feminicide male. In Costa Rica, 2007, the year of the Law Criminalizing Violence against Women.

### ► The violent death rates dropped in Costa Rica during 2021

In 2021, the violent death rate of women was 2.1 per 100,000 women.

Violent death rate of women over time, and worldwide average, 2010-2021

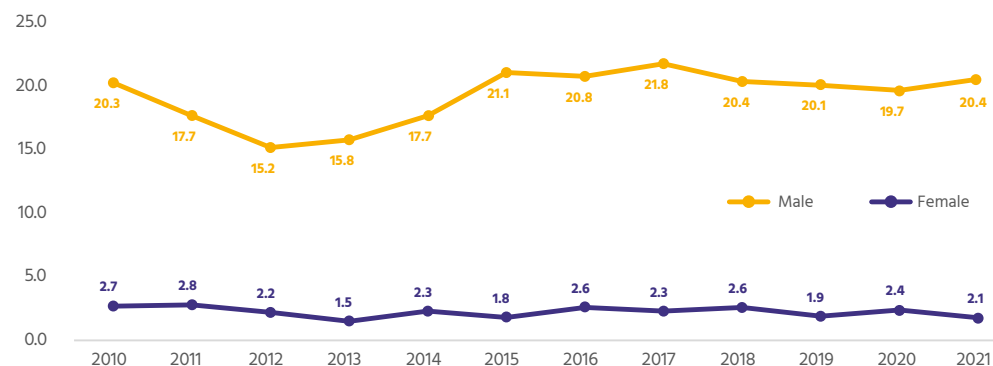


Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department, 2010-2021.

Source: Observatory on Gender-Based Violence against Women and Access to Justice.

► Over the last year, there has been a noticeable reduction in the rate for females and an increase in the rate for males

Rates of violent deaths of women and men over time, 2010-2021

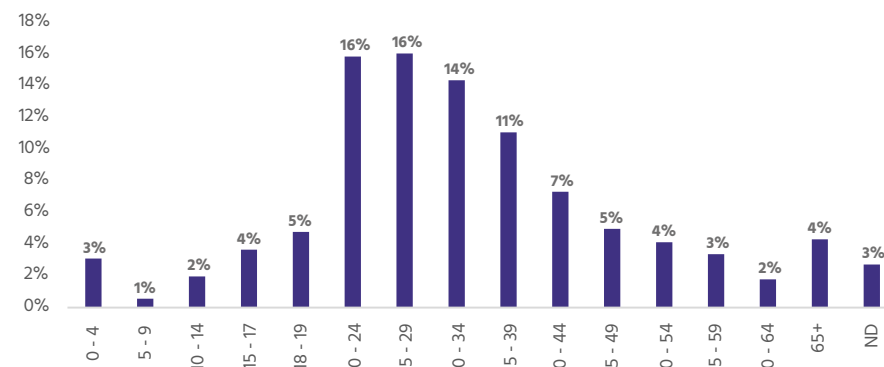


Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department, 2010-2021.

► The primary victims of violent death were adult women ages 20 to 34

46% of victims were females ages 20 to 34.

Number of violent deaths of women by age group, 2010-2021

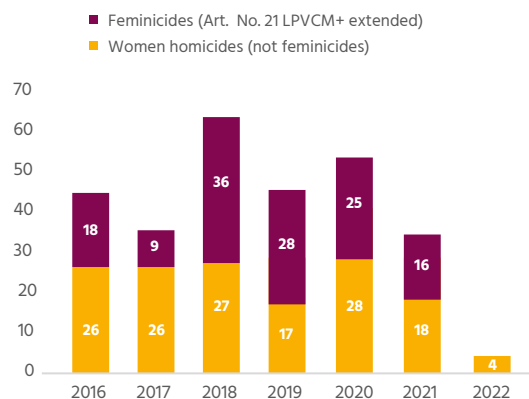


Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department, 2010-2021.

► In 2021, 64 violent deaths of women were registered; 18 of these were femicides

- 9 as per Art. 21 of the Law Penalizing Violence against Women, and 9 as per expanded femicide.
- 16 homicides that were not femicides.
- Classification of 30 deaths is pending.

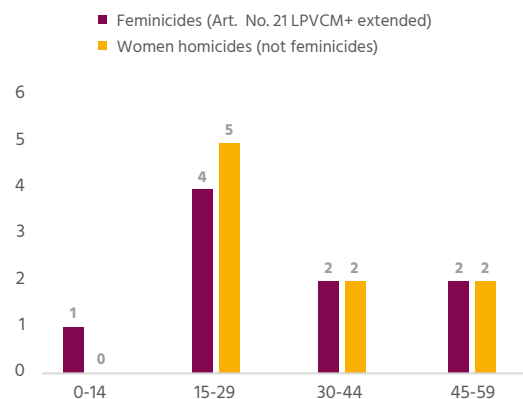
Number of violent deaths of women and femicides over time, 2016-2022



► Violent deaths of women due to femicide happen in all age groups

The victims of femicide recorded in 2021 are between the ages of 14 to 58.

Number of femicides registered in Costa Rica by age of victim, by type, 2021

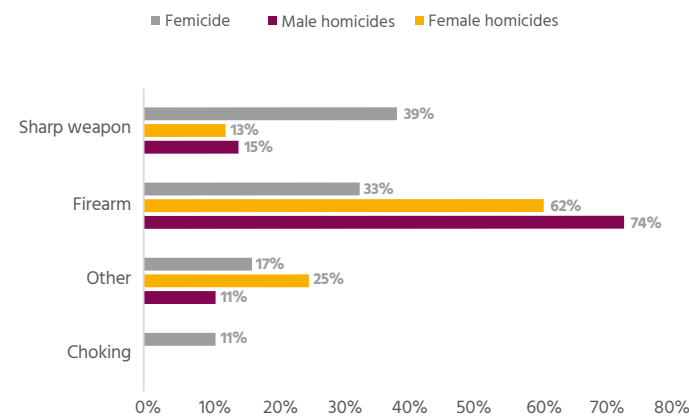


Data provided by Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Justice System Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention, updated on February 06, 2022.

► In the continuum of violence, the lives of men and women are taken in different ways

The majority of female victims of femicide were killed by means of a sharp weapon; in the case of male victims, firearms were the most common method used.

Weapon or method used by type of incident, 2021



Source: Data provided by Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention, updated on February 06, 2022, and the Judicial Investigation Department, 2021

Note: Data as of February 06, 2022 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Justice System Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention.