



# **COSTA RICA**

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE LIFE CYCLE, 2020**

- 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 (Convention of Belém do Pará), 1994.

### Continuum of violence

This refers to an inertia and continuity of violence in the lives of women, in which there seems to be a continuum in their histories where the norm and the constant is violence directed toward them, always and everywhere.

Source: UNDP and USAID, 2016.

The Continuum of Violence against Women: **A matter of citizen security and Human Rights**



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 Y CHALLENGES

### Legal framework, information management y victimization

#### Legal Framework Timeline

<p>🕒 2021</p> <p><b>Law 9975</b> 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.</p>	<p>🕒 2020</p> <p><b>Law 9.877</b> Law Against Street Sexual Harassment (free sexual harassment in life and when traveling)</p>	<p>🕒 2016</p> <p><b>Law 9.406</b> 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).</p>	<p>🕒 2012</p> <p><b>Law 9.095 - Law Against Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Costa Rica.</b> The purpose of this law is to promote public policies to combat Human Trafficking.</p>	<p>🕒 2011</p> <p><b>Law 8.929</b> Reform to the Law Criminalizing Violence against Women. <b>Law 8. 925</b> Law against Domestic Violence.</p>	<p>🕒 2010</p> <p><b>Law 8.805</b> Reform of the Law Against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Education.</p>
<p>🕒 2008</p> <p><b>Law 8.688</b> Creation of the National System for the attention and prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.</p>	<p>🕒 2007</p> <p><b>Law 8.589</b> Criminalization of violence against women. <b>Legislative Decree 8.589</b> Criminalization of violence against women.</p>	<p>🕒 1996</p> <p><b>Law 7.586</b> Against domestic violence.</p>	<p>🕒 1995</p> <p><b>Law 7.499</b> Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. <b>Law 7.446</b> Reform of the Law Against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Education.</p>	<p>🕒 1990</p> <p><b>Law 7.142</b> Promotion of women's social equality.</p>	<p>🕒 1988</p> <p><b>Law 7.801</b> for the creation of the National Institute for Women</p>
					<p>🕒 1984</p> <p><b>Law 6.968</b> Approved Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</p>

## 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

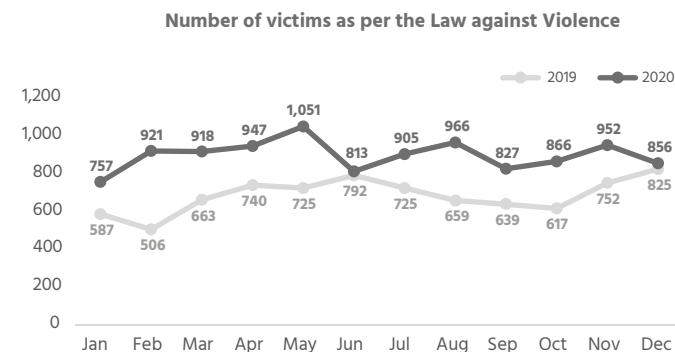
### Intrafamily violence

Domestic Violence is any situation involving physical, psychological, sexual or property abuse in which the individual who carries out the violent act has a relationship of consanguinity, affinity or adoption with the assaulted person. Since 1996, Costa Rica has a Law against Domestic Violence, providing mothers, children, individuals age sixty and over, people with disabilities and victims of intimate-partner violence, special tools to request protection measures to guarantee their life, integrity and dignity.

Fuente: Observatorio de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres y Acceso a la Justicia del Poder Judicial

► During every month in 2020, a greater recorded number of victims under the Law against the Domestic Violence. In all, in 2020 there were 10,779 victims, equivalent to 2,549 individuals (+31%) more than in 2019.

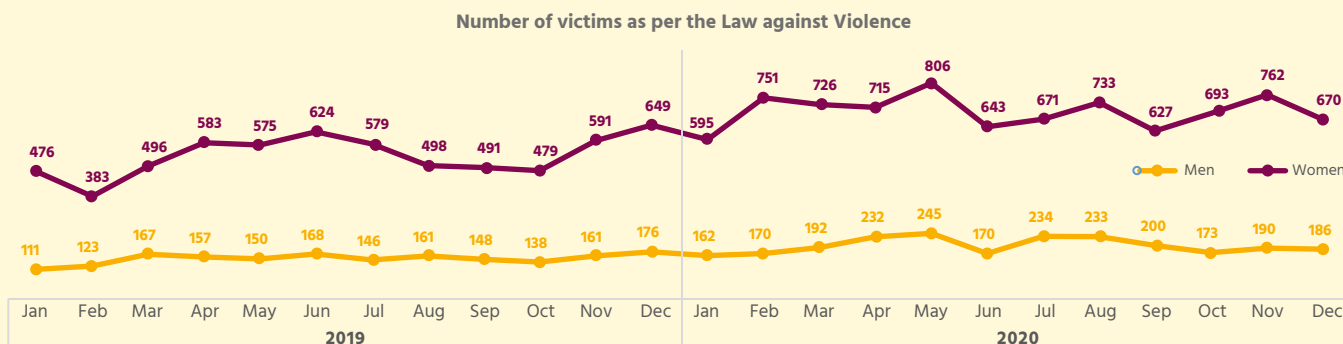
There was a spike in the number of victims under the Law against Domestic Violence in May 2020



Source: Prepared using data provided by the Ministry of Public Security

► Victims (78%) continue to be mostly women in 2020.

The increment was similar for both males (+32%, +581 victims) as it was for females (+31%, +1,968 victims)

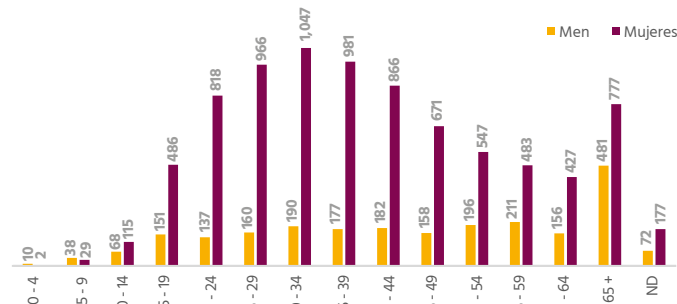


Source: Prepared using data provided by the Ministry of Public Security

### Number of victims as per the Law against Domestic Violence, 2020

► One in three women victims of domestic violence are between 20 and 35 years of age.

The proportion of the men between the same ages is significantly less (22%)

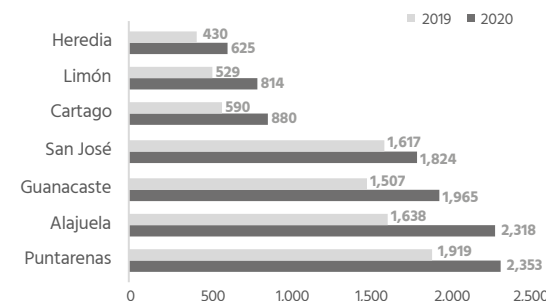


Source: Prepared using data provided by the Ministry of Public Security

► The number of victims under the Law against Domestic Violence increased in provinces all across the country

The greatest percentage increase was in the Province of Limon (+54%).

### Number of victims as per the Law against Domestic Violence



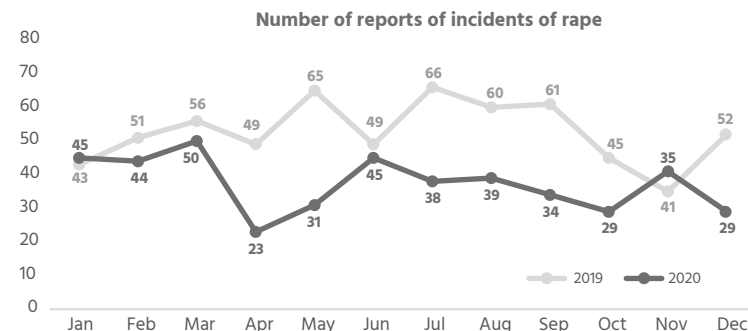
Source: Prepared using data provided by the Ministry of Public Security

## Sexual violence

Sexual violence is any action that forces an individual to maintain sexual, physical or verbal contact, or participate in sexual intercourse against their will: by the use of force, intimidation, coercion, blackmail, bribery, manipulation, threat or any other mechanism that overrides or limits personal will. Sexual violence is also present in cases where the victim is forced to undertake sexual acts with third parties.

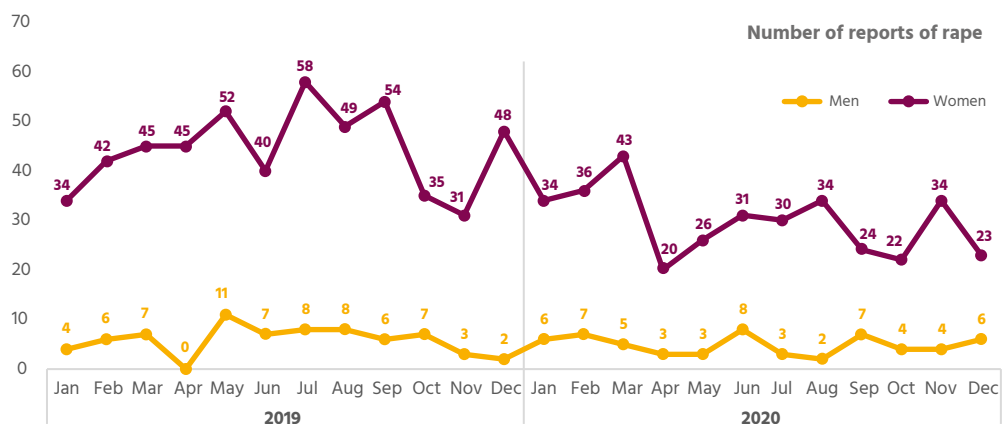
- The number of incidents of rape reported in 2020 (448) it was fewer than 2019, except for January and November (-29%, 184 fewer reports).

A sharp decline in reports of rape was recorded in April and May 2020. However, this reduction may have to do with limited mobility due to COVID 19 pandemic, more than with a reduction in cases.



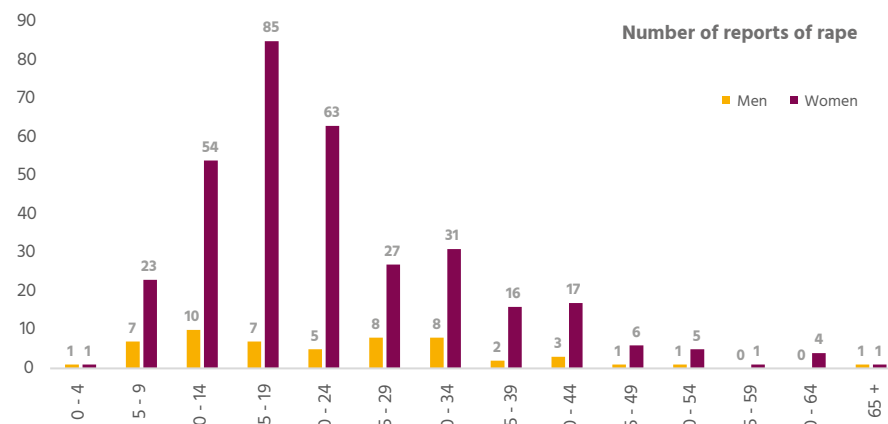
Source: Judicial Investigation Department

- Some 86% of persons who reported they had been victims of rape in 2020 were female



Source: Judicial Investigation Department.

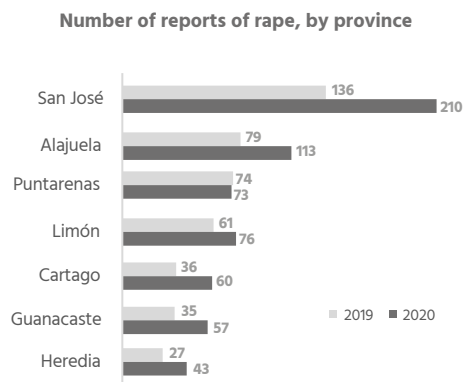
- 7 in 10 women who reported being victims rape were under the age of 25



Source: Judicial Investigation Department

- In 2020, the number of reports of rape declined in all provinces, except for Puntarenas.

Compared to 2019, the greatest reduction in reports of rape was in the province of Cartago (-40%).



Source: Judicial Investigation Department

## Street harassment

**52**  
ARRESTED  
All Males

**32**  
STALKING

**16**  
EXHIBITIONISM

**4**  
PRODUCTION OF  
AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

Where? San José (15), Guanacaste (6), Cartago (8), Heredia (4) ● 4 Sentenced to 4, 5 & 7 months in prison

### Law 9.877 against Street harassment

Street harassment is understood to be any behavior with a sexually explicit or implicit connotation by a stranger, occurring in public spaces and with the potential for upsetting the person being harassed. This type of violence is unwelcome conduct, therefore it generates a negative psychological impact in people, particularly women, some since the age of 12, on average, who may be victims of street harassment several times a day.

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

# Femicide

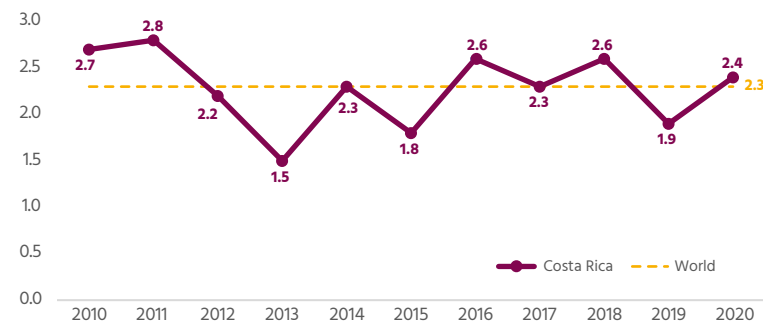
Femicide is the most serious gender-based violence, involving the murder of a woman because of her status as a woman, usually at the hand of a present or former partner, or another man with whom she has no relationship or is no longer in a partner relationship. This is not common homicide, but the product, normally, of escalating violence, and an unequal relationship between the woman and man femicide.

Fuente: Observatorio de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres y Acceso a la Justicia del Poder Judicial

► **The Violent death rate rose in 2020. 61 violent Deaths of Women were registered; 32 more than the previous year.**

In 2020, the violent death rate of women was 2.4 per 100,000 women and surpasses the worldwide average that is 2.3 violent deaths per 100,000 women.

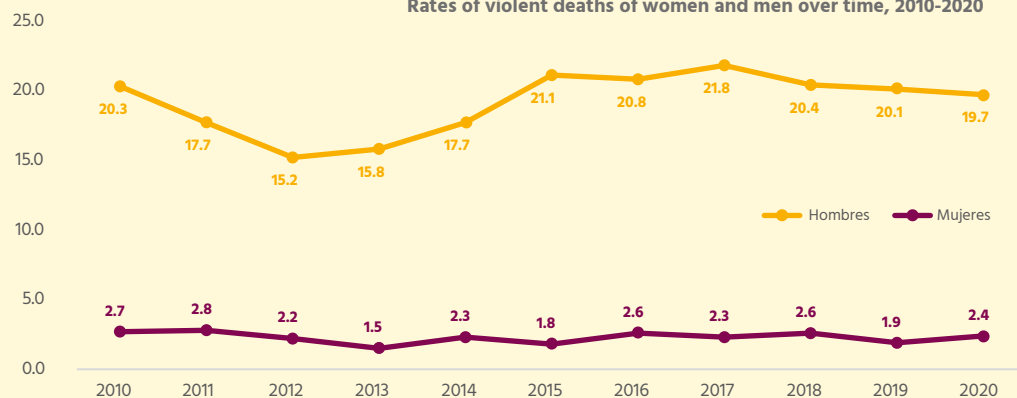
Violent death rate of women over time, and worldwide average, 2010-2020



Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department.

► **While the violent death rate in women rose, that of men shrank compared to 2019.**

Rates of violent deaths of women and men over time, 2010-2020

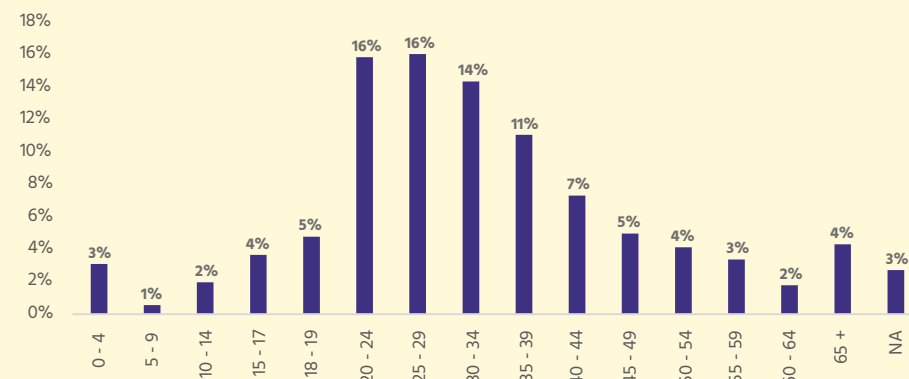


Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department.

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

46% of victims were females ages 20 to 34

Percentage of violent deaths of women, by age, 2010-2020



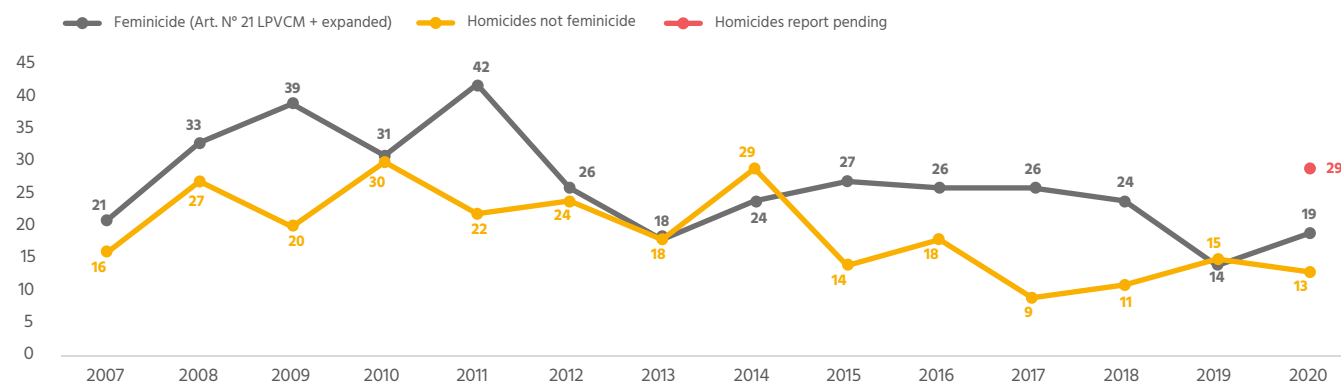
Source: Prepared with data from the Judicial Investigation Department.

► **The Violence against Women Law has served to typify more cases as femicide in Costa Rica.**

In 2020, a total of 19 femicides were recorded according to categories established by Law.

This subtotal constitutes 31% of the violent deaths of women recorded that same year

Number of violent deaths of women and femicides over time, 2007-2020



Note: Data as of February 17, 2021 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommission on Femicide Prevention.

## Number of femicides rose in 2020

In 2020, the number of cases of Expanded Femicide (Belém do Pará) rose while femicide classified under Art No. 21 LPVCM dropped.

This includes two types of femicide: First is legal femicide, typified in Article 21 of the law Criminalizing Violence against Women, sanctioning the deaths of women at the hands of husband or current partner. And second, expanded femicide (Belém do Pará). This includes violent deaths of women, by gender, when there was no bond by marriage or common-law union: for instance, death during courtship, following a divorce, after the termination of a de facto union and those occurring in the public sphere, resulting from a sexual attack, and others.

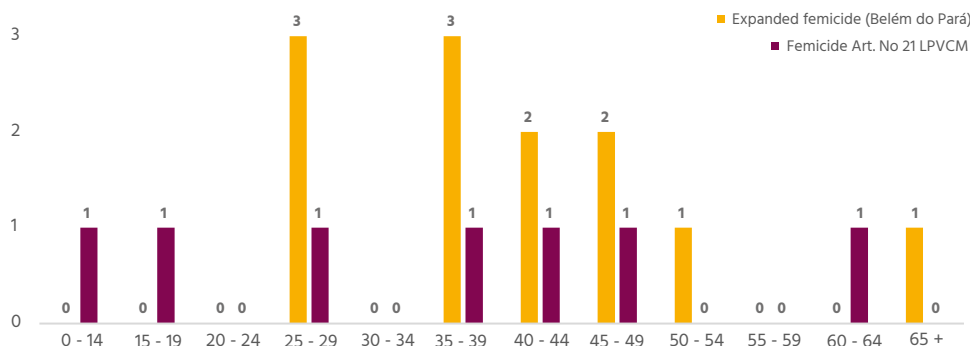
Data provided by Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention, updated on February 17, 2021.

Note: Data as of February 17, 2021 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention.



## Victims of most Expanded Feminicides (Belém do Pará) were between the ages of 35 to 49 (60% approximately)

Number homicides, by age, 2020

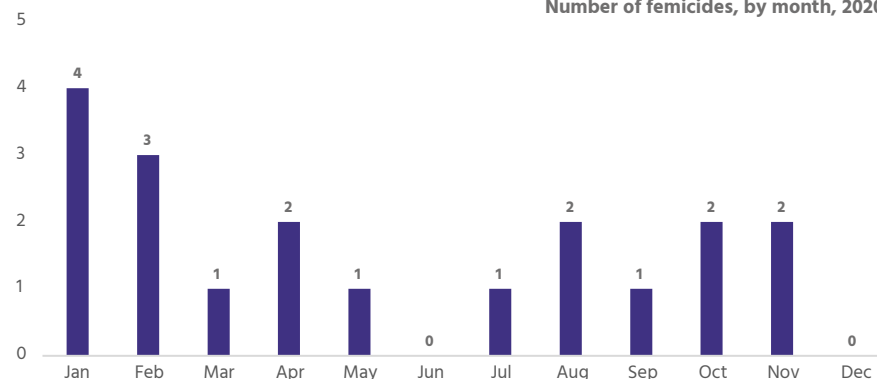


Data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention, updated February 17, 2021.

Note: As of February 17, 2021 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention.

## As of March, there was a decline in the number femicides

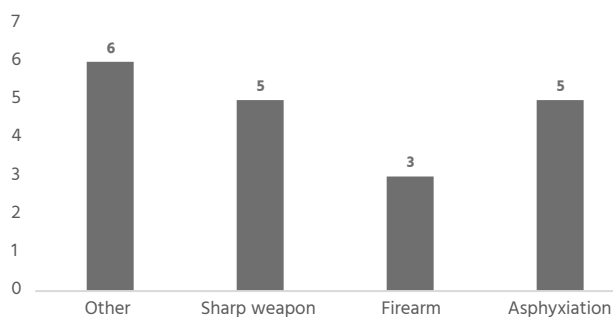
Number of femicides, by month, 2020



Note: As of February 17, 2021 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention.

## Over half (53%) of femicides were committed with a sharp weapon or by asphyxiation.

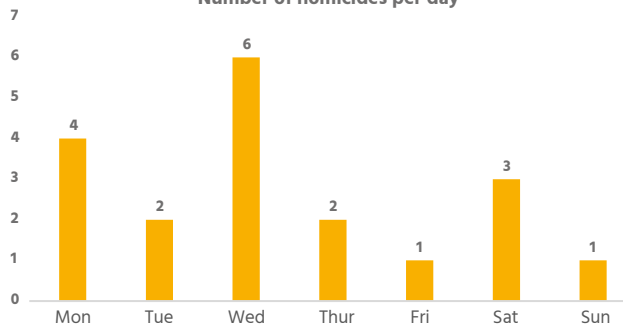
Percentage of homicides by type of weapon, 2020



Note: As of February 17, 2021 with data provided by the Deputy Prosecutor for Gender Affairs, the Judicial Branch Statistics Subprocess and the Inter-institutional Subcommittee on Femicide Prevention.

## Femicides mostly take place on weekdays

Number of homicides per day



## Over half (58%) of femicides were committed in San Jose and Alajuela

Number of homicides per province, 2020

