



## Femicide: Stop the Killing of Women by Men in South Africa

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, the killing of women by men in South Africa has reached an unacceptable crescendo. Most of the victims have entrusted their lives in the hands of loved ones turned killers. Several victims of femicide are very familiar with their killers, in some instances are in a social relationship. Femicide is a manifestation of one of the devastating effects of patriarchy in contemporary society. More than three women are killed in South Africa daily. Some of the causes of femicide are male dominance, alcohol and firearms, social and cultural beliefs, psychologically related illness, breakdown in relationships, economic challenges, frustration, aggression, and violence. This article has three aims, first, to highlight and fight against femicide. Second, to call for harsher punishment to be put in place within our criminal justice process, and third to explore preventative measures designed to reduce femicide. Some of the findings are that collectively as a society we are not doing enough to put to an end this callous murder committed by men against defenceless women. Refuge homes for victims of gender-based violence need to be adequately funded, social workers need to be very much more proactive in rescuing women from the hands of their potential male killers. Finally, the government must create businesses and employment to empower women with the financial power needed to become independent from abusive men.

**Keywords:** *Femicide, Patriarchy; Gender-Based Violence; Unlawful Violence; Murder; Women; Crime; South Africa*

## 1. Introduction

South Africa has one of the world's most progressive constitutions that guarantee gender equality. Yet violence against women and children persists. It is against this background as a globally recognized author decide to highlight the ongoing femicide in South Africa. The author argues that there is no reason or excuse for a man to kill a woman even in the face of any provocation. There must be other acceptable ways of resolving conflicts without resulting to violence at home, in public, and with other people you may not even know. The author argues that it is humanely wrong for citizens to continue to look at the other side whilst our women are killed daily by men in South Africa. The author uses this medium to say that the killing of women must **STOP** in South Africa now. Every potential killer of women must be placed under surveillance, if need be, monitored 24/7 to prevent such killings. Women need more protection in South Africa now than before because men have become predators wanting to prey on the lives of defenseless women. One cannot understand what drives a man to the extent of wanting to kill the same woman whom he is supposed to love, cater, and protect from harm. Each time a woman is killed by a man in South Africa and in anywhere in world the author feel a sense of shame, helplessness and frustration, the author warns that he may decide to embark on a public hunger strike to declare his stance against femicide. Women have become endangered species which we must be ready to always protect from their partners. Women live in perpetual of men. The psycho- deficient men amongst us needs to clearly understand that women are not material possessions, they have a mind of their own and have right to say no to male advances without fear of any recrimination.

Article 1 of the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, provides that gender based violence is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life"[1]. The UN Vienna declaration of 26 November 2012 recognising that femicide is the killing of women and girls because of their gender, which can take any of the following:

1. The murder of women because of domestic violence/intimate partner violence.
2. The torture and misogynist slaying of women
3. The killing of women and girls in the name of "honor".
4. Targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict.
5. Dowry-related killings of women and girls.
6. The killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity; 7) the killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender; 8) female infanticide and gender-based sex selection foeticide;
7. Genital mutilation related femicide.
8. Accusations of witchcraft.
9. Other femicides connected with gangs, organized crime, drug dealers, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms,

Violence against women in South Africa is embedded in a history of brutality that has been central to the making of the country. Many of the acts of colonial dispossession, invasion, war, slavery and apartheid, as well as resistance to end this domination, have entailed violence to the bodies of women. While most of the historical articulations of the wars against black South Africans are behind us, the war against women and girls lives on in the everyday occurrence of domestic violence, femicide, rape, sexual abuse, harassment, and harmful cultural practices such as ukuthwala (abduction of girls for marriage) and attacks on people labelled witches are of a very high uncontrollable proportionate scale. The high risk of violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls stems, in large part, from a failure of police and others in the criminal justice system to adequately respond to, or provide for, the needs of Indigenous women and girls.

## Definitions of femicide and related concepts

There are several definitions of femicide found within academic discourses. According to late South African feminist and scholar Diana Russell (2001) defined ‘femicide as ‘the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender, usually by a man, is the most extreme form of gender-based violence.’ [2]. Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls. Femicide is usually perpetrated by men, but sometimes female family members may be involved. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner.

Russell (2012) defined as “the murder of women by men motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership of women” and “the misogynistic killings of women by men.” Most recently, this definition evolved to its most used form as “the killing of one or more females by one or more males because they are female [3]. Men are the main are the primary perpetrators of femicide and that most femicides are committed by current or former male partners – a pattern that exists worldwide although proportions vary across world regions [4]. The identified forms of femicide are as follows:

- Intimate femicide: The killing of a female person by an intimate partner (i.e, her current or ex-husband or boyfriend, same sex partner or a rejected would-be lover). It can also include women killed by other family members (e.g., sons, fathers). Globally, women are much more likely than men to be assaulted, raped, or killed by a current or former partner. Intimate femicide most often occurs within relationships where there is a history of intimate partner violence.
- Non-Intimate femicide: The killing of a woman by someone other than an intimate partner. Non-intimate femicide involves the killing of women ‘by someone without an intimate relationship with the victim’. It can involve sexual femicide and/or serial killing. Sexual femicide involves sexual aggression; however, it should also be noted that the sexual aspect of the homicide may not be evident through investigation which could lead to cases being classified incorrectly. Serial killings of women often motivated by misogyny or hatred of women, classifying these murders as femicide.
- Female homicide: Intimate and non-intimate femicide (Honor killings, Sexual orientation killings or gender identity killings).

**Murders in the name of “honor”** refer to the killing of women/girls because their behavior (e.g. choice of partner, education, employment; dressing “inappropriately”; premarital sex) is viewed as having casted shame upon their family. Honor, from the perspective of the murderer, is seen as restored to the family only upon the death of the woman or girl. These killings are usually perpetrated by male family members and take many forms, including stoning, stabbing, burning, beheading; forcing women/girls to commit suicide; and disfiguring women/girls with acid, resulting in death. Killings frequently take place in public to influence other women in the community.

**Murder of women and girls because of their sexual orientation or gender identity:** Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women and girls are subject to high levels of physical violence, often exceeding the level of violence present in other hate crimes and resulting in death. Sexual assault may also be used in these crimes as a method of persecution against women who are viewed by perpetrators as having violated traditional sexual or gender norms. These types of crime are often classified as hate-crimes.

### **Female infanticide and gender-based sex-selective foeticide**

Female infanticide refers to the intentional killing of female infants because they are female. It usually occurs by suffocation, drowning, neglect, or exposure to other dangers. When female fetuses are aborted because they are female, it is considered gender-based sex-selective foeticide. These types of femicide are reflective of “the lower ‘value’ of women in patriarchal societies”.

### **Genital mutilation related femicide**

Female genital mutilation involves the partial or full removal and/or injury of female genitalia for non-medical purposes. It is typically performed on girls between infancy and fifteen years of age. Infections incurred as the result of unhygienic operations frequently result in loss of life, which is considered an acceptable outcome.

### **Dowry-related femicide**

A dowry is a cultural tradition where the family of the bride provides money and/or property to the family of the groom. When a larger dowry is requested following the marriage of the bride and groom, or when the groom's family is dissatisfied with the dowry given to them, the woman starts to be considered an ‘unsuitable wife’. Women are then murdered or forced to commit suicide through torture and harassment by the groom's family.

### **Organized crime related femicide**

Organized crime-related femicide involves femicides associated with gangs, drug and/or human trafficking, and gun proliferation. This type of killing can involve abduction, torture and sexual assault, murder and mutilation, decapitation, and ‘the public display and/or dumping of naked bodies and/or body parts in casino empty wastelands. Violence against women in drug culture symbolizes gang cohesion and masculinity that serves to threaten the enemy. Women are also viewed as disposable objects in drug culture, reinforced by their use as drug mules without concern for their well-being [5], [6], [7], [8]

### **The Extent of Femicide in South Africa**

The police however do not provide us with a breakdown of the motive behind the murder of women. So, it is not possible to say how many were killed because they were female. According to a breakdown of statistical reports provided by the South African Police Service over the years in relation to femicide. First, it paints a very worrying development when it comes to reporting the total number of victims in relation to murder (femicide). The South African Police Service regularly releases a breakdown of murder victims by age group and sex. In the 2017/18 reporting year, it shows that 20 336 people were murdered. Most of the murder victims were males. This is equal to one murder every 30 minutes. In the same year 2017/8, It was reported that 2 930 adult women were murdered. It translates as a woman being murdered every three to four hours in South Africa. Femicide is on the rise in South Africa, with Statistics South Africa reporting that the murder rate for women increased drastically by 117% between 2015 and 2016/17.

### **Source: South African Police Service [8].**

In another report provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) 2016, it was reported that: While the number of murders committed each year is an important indicator, it does not provide insight

into the relative risk faced by a group. To determine whether the risk is increasing or decreasing you have to calculate the murder rate. The murder rate for adult women is calculated using the number of victims from the police and population estimates from Stats SA. Based on these figures, the adult women murder rate was 15.2 in 2017/18. This means that there were 15.2 murders for every 100 000 adult women in South Africa. In 2016, the age-standardised interpersonal violence death rate for the female population in South Africa was 12.5 per 100 000. This was 4.8 times the global average rate of 2.6. South Africa had the fourth-highest female interpersonal violence death rate out of the 183 countries listed by the WHO in 2016. **Source:** [World Health Organisation](#)

Next, the author compares femicide in South Africa to other worst murder high-rated countries globally. Even though most of the roughly 20 000 murders reported per year in South Africa are of men - only about one in every eight people murdered in South Africa is a woman - the number of women murdered per year is high. Compared with other countries where stats are available, South Africa ranks among the five countries with the highest female homicide rates with Central and South American countries like Venezuela, Honduras, and El Salvador, according to the 2019 Global Homicide Report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The UNODC collects data primarily from criminal justice sources. Other sources of homicide data, for example, the World Health Organisation, collect data from public health sources. The UNODC, therefore, uses the same statistics as the police. In 2017, the UNODC estimated the global total female homicide rate at 2.3 per 100 000 female population. South Africa's rate that year was 10.1 per 100 000. In 2018, South Africa's rate dropped slightly to 9.5 per 100 000. But, in comparison, the US rate was 2.2 per 100 000, and India's was 2.7 per 100 000, according to UNODC data. Some of the findings of the UNODC report 2019 are as follows:

- An average of seven murders a day in South Africa.
  - In the five-year period between 2015 and 2020, 13 815 women over the age of 18 were murdered in South Africa according to the South African Police Report 2019/2020 reporting years. That is an average of 2 763 murders per year.
  - In 2019/2020, 2695 women were murdered.
  - In 2018/2019, 2,771 women were murdered.
  - In 2017/2018, 2,930 women were murdered.
  - In 2016/2017, 2,639 women were murdered.
  - In 2015/2016, 2,780 women were murdered.
- (UNODC,2019)

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This research is a qualitative study. The author consulted a wide range of related textbooks to the topic of study 'femicide'. The author employed the use of ten case studies of women who were killed in South Africa by men. Case study research is good for understanding complex issues in real-life settings, and it is often used to understand the perspective of participants in those settings. The characteristics of a case study are a case that is bounded or defined in time, space, and activity. A context-based study of the phenomenon, rather than a study, conducted in a laboratory or through modeling. Case studies have multiple sources of evidence. In this study, the author relied on feminist theory to support his arguments for highlighting the ills of patriarchy in our contemporary society.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

#### **Physical violence as a catalyst for femicide**

The World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. (World Health Organization, Global Status Report on Violence Prevention, 2014). The most significant risk factors include social and economic inequality, frustrated masculinity, lack of social cohesion, and alcohol and firearms. In order to prevent violence and address its effects, we need to understand how these multiple and intersecting factors converge to result in violence. Violence research since apartheid has primarily focused on four forms of interpersonal and collective violence: homicide, sexual and gender-based violence, youth violence and violence against children, and protest-related public violence. South Africa is consistently among the countries with the highest levels of this violence. At about 34.1 murders per 100,000 people per year, rates of homicide in the country are very high, with cases of intimate femicide counted as the highest in the world. Twenty-five percent of South African women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and new studies suggest that even more experience non-partner violence [13, 14]. The author categorises violence into three separate headings as follows: self-directed, interpersonal, or collective. Self-directed violence refers to thoughts or actions oriented towards suicide or self-harm. Interpersonal violence is divided into two forms: family and community. Family violence is perpetrated between family members and intimate partners inside the home. Community violence is perpetrated by people who may or may not know each other, usually in public places. Collective violence, meanwhile, is motivated by political, economic, and social factors.

#### **Causes of Violence**

##### **Social and Economic Inequality**

Inequality is a super-driver of violence. Research shows that fatal violence tends to occur in places with high levels of social and economic inequality, although often in combination with other risk factors. Studies suggest that the hopelessness, shame, guilt, and stress associated with inequality, constraints on life opportunities, and limited resources give rise to violence in the country, particularly in the context of a 26.6 percent unemployment rate. In South Africa’s patriarchal society, where men are generally expected to be unconditionally powerful providers, not having the resources to play this role creates the conditions for violence. Poverty increases the likelihood of being both a perpetrator and a victim of gender-based violence, especially intimate partner violence.

##### **1. Patriarchy and male Chauvinism**

In violence between men and women, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators. This gender-based violence usually involves the assertion of power and control, as in the case of intimate partner violence. Research shows that gender discipline is a motivation in youth violence, including individual rapes and homicides, particularly for adolescent men in gangs. Gender discipline is also a driver of collective gender-based violence, namely gang rape or rape by multiple perpetrators over time, which research suggests is used similarly to rape in wartime, to assert dominance over women and prove it to other men in contexts where idealised masculinity appears under threat.



## **2. Alcohol and Firearms**

Alcohol and firearms, especially together, are primary drivers of both fatal and non-fatal violence. Over 50 percent of homicide victims test positive for alcohol, and studies of femicide show that the bulk of both victims and perpetrators have alcohol in their system at the time of the crime. Firearms, meanwhile, were the highest cause of death among youth in South Africa between 2001 and 2009, and the rate of women killed by firearms in the country has been the highest globally.

## **3. Psychological deficiency**

Men described being driven to kill by their partner's behaviour towards them and feeling that they no longer felt respected by them. Men spoke about feeling 'belittled' and 'humiliated' by their partners which impacted on their sense of manliness. For most men these idealized, once 'perfect' women were now flawed due to their perceived indiscretions or behaviour which was not fitting. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory we developed an argument in the previous article on these men's childhoods: that their unresolved traumatic childhood experiences have had a lasting impact on their ability to form and maintain relationships based on their inability to integrate love and trust (Mathews et al. 2011). Their emotional insecurities and fragile sense of self allowed these men to polarize their partners into all good or bad (Siegel 2006). This unconscious psychological split allows men to see their partner as flawed and all bad, and thus allowed them to kill the partner they once adored without remorse, and to externalize blame. Most men presented themselves as having lost control of their relationship at the time of the killing. All the relationships had fallen apart by then and nearly half the women had a protection order when they were killed. Men felt that protection orders against them gave women immense power and were unjust towards them.

## **4. Socio-cultural and economic factors**

Social and cultural factors for a start, all of South Africa's 11 ethnic groups are steeped in patriarchal traditions. As Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs once put it, "the only truly non-racial institution in South Africa is patriarchy." Men expect to be dominant, and many women accept the perception that women are subservient to men in relationships. Rules and prescriptions relating to gender roles and relations are mainly applied to women; the work they must do, the role they must play in family and society, whom they may associate with, their movements, and so on. These rules aim to "keep women in their place." traditional gender roles in communities, which involve women staying at home to raise the family and men going out to work to provide for the family. Women were expected by men to be submissive to their husbands and men were expected to be the decision-makers. Historical factors Cultural and societal factors are compounded by the country's history of apartheid. Some individuals and communities internalised the brutality experienced in that era such that it became a way of life. Black men who had been belittled at work or imprisoned would come home angry and take out their anger on those over whom they had power- their families. White men who learned to glorify violence also took their violent habits back into the home. All this compounded the glorification of brutality and male violence in South Africa's macho culture.

## **5. Economic factors**

The legacy of apartheid worsened the socio-economic conditions of women as they remained at home while men went to work as migrant labour. Women were and continue to be heavily dependent on their partners for their livelihood making it difficult to leave abusive relationships. While gender violence cuts across class, race, and ethnicity, there is no doubt that poor women and children are far more vulnerable to violence, and have less access to recourse, than those who are economically empowered. While violence against women is prevalent across social classes, the combination of poverty shaped by

race has a fundamental impact on women's vulnerability to violence (and related to this, also to HIV infection). Lack of access to income and employment deepen women's dependency on men and limits their capacity to leave violent partners. Limited access to housing and social security also make escape impossible for many. Inadequate health care and social services mean that responses to violence often fall short of what is needed. Poor basic services such as transport, sanitation, water, and electricity expose women to risks of attack in urban and rural environments [15,16].

## 6. Slayer, Blesser and Blessee toxic and exploitative social relationships

The concept of 'blessers' is a social relationship resulting from financial insecurity and exploitation. An interesting phenomenon associated with the economic dependency of women on men in South Africa and its relationship with abuse was the concept of 'blessers', as described by the young women in one of the FGDs. This entails women deliberately seeking out financial support from older men in order to benefit financially from them, as well as older men deliberately 'touting' at young women for sexual exploitation. The trend was said to have started on social media, where unemployed young women posted about their exotic lifestyles, claiming they had been 'blessed'. Social media users then started asking the girls who their 'blessers' were. The term 'blesser' in South Africa has therefore become synonymous with someone who blesses a partner with money, holidays, and other material gifts. The 'blesser' is in many ways like the traditional old 'sugar daddy'. These gifts from sugar-daddy types have created a culture of moral decadence and paralysis[17]. The blesser and blessee relationship thrives in an environment of high unemployment and scarce resources unavailability of finances. The authors warn that the blesser in some instances is diagnosed with a serious sexually transmitted disease, there is a high risk that young vulnerable women are inflicted with life-threatening illnesses. It is shameful circumstances and moral bankruptcy for anyone that pride themselves as a blesser, blessee or slayer. As both identifications carry a very high risk. Most of these kinds of relationships normally turn out to have a very violent ending, blackmail, and assault. Several women have lost their lives from this kind of unhealthy relationship. Men have become serial predators because of the economic power and status they possess in our society. The author calls for the government to empower women through meaningful and gainful employment so that they can be more self-reliant to break this vicious circle of exploitation of the "haves over the have-nots". If there is anything else, the author sees this kind of social relationship as a curse, not a blessing because of the dangers associated with it[18; 19].

Next, in this section, the author takes a look at the feminism theory propounded by Simone de Beauvoir (1953) as a basis for the empowering theoretical framework informing the study. Second, the author introduces case studies of women killed in South Africa by men. The author unequivocally condemns all killings and argues that there is no justifiable reason for a man to kill a woman or kill anybody.

### Feminism theory (Simone de Beauvoir 1908-1986)

Simone de Beauvoir was born on January 9, 1908. She died seventy-eight years later, on April 14, 1986. At the time of her death, she was honored as a crucial figure in the struggle for women's rights, and as an eminent writer, having won the Prix Goncourt, the prestigious French literary award, for her novel *The Mandarins* (1954). She was also famous for being the lifelong companion of Jean-Paul Sartre. Active in the French intellectual scene all of her life and was a central player in the philosophical debates of the time. Feminist theories are unified in the attention accorded to gender and power. A feminist understanding of Violence Against Women (VAW) stresses that violence is gender specific and directed at women. Further, VAW cannot be theorised without acknowledging male privilege and historically and socially institutionalised relations of power. Theorists also recognise that VAW stems from a patriarchal culture that maintains men's domination both within the family and in society at large [20]. De Beauvoir (1953) in her classic book on feminism titled "The Second Sex" juxtaposes the following key arguments highlighting the importance of women's liberation from men. She argued that it was the point for women



simply to take power out of men's hands since that wouldn't change anything about the world. It's a question precisely of destroying that notion of power. Beauvoir takes herself, her situation, her embodiment, and the situations and embodiments of other women, as the subjects of her philosophical reflections. Where *The Ethics of Ambiguity* conjured up images of ethical and unethical figures to make its arguments tangible, the analyses of *The Second Sex* are materialized in Beauvoir's experiences as a woman and in women's lived realities. Where *The Ethics of Ambiguity* speaks of mystification in a general sense, *The Second Sex* speaks of the specific ways that the natural and social sciences and the European literary, social, political, and religious traditions have created a world where impossible and conflicting ideals of femininity produce an ideology of women's "natural" inferiority to justify patriarchal domination. Her argument for sexual equality takes two directions. First, it exposes the ways that masculine ideology exploits sexual differences to create systems of inequality. Second, it identifies the ways that arguments for equality erase the sexual difference in order to establish the masculine subject as the absolute human type. Only men or those who emulate them may rule. Beauvoir's argument for equality does not fall into this trap. She insists that women and men treat each other as equals and that such treatment requires that their sexual differences be validated. Equality is not a synonym for sameness.

*The Second Sex* argues for women's equality while insisting on the reality of the sexual difference. Beauvoir finds it unjust and immoral to use sexual difference as an argument for women's subordination. She finds it un-phenomenological, however, to ignore it. Beauvoir explores the ways that cultural assumptions frame women's experiences of their bodies and alienate them from their body's possibilities. For example, it is assumed that women are the weaker sex. What, she directs us to ask, is the ground of this assumption? What criteria of strength are used? Upper body power? Average body size? Is there a reason not to consider longevity a sign of strength? *The Second Sex* gave us the vocabulary for analyzing the social constructions of femininity and a method for critiquing these constructions. By not accepting the commonsense idea that to be born with female genitalia is to be born a woman this most famous line of *The Second Sex* pursues the first rule of phenomenology: identify your assumptions, treat them as prejudices, and put them aside; do not bring them back into play until and unless they have been validated by experience. *The Second Sex* a liberatory tool: by attending to the ways that patriarchal structures used the sexual difference to deprive women of their "can do" bodies, Beauvoir made the case for declaring this deprivation oppressive. Taken within the context of the feminist movement, this declaration of oppression was an event. It opened the way for the consciousness-raising that characterized second-wave feminism; it validated women's experiences of injustice.

De Beauvoir sustained her arguments by stating that if patriarchy is to be dismantled, we will have to understand how heteronormative sexuality serves it. We will have to denaturalize it. *The Second Sex* alerts us to the ways that Beauvoir used existential and Marxist categories to analyze the unique complexities of women's situations. A woman's happiness may be chosen or accepted in exchange for the deprivations of freedom. As the socially constructed Others, women are returned to the metaphysically privileged world of the child. They experience the happiness brought about by bad faith—the happiness of not being responsible for themselves, of not having to make consequential choices. From this existential perspective, women may be said to be complicit in their subjugation. When women act like women, they are accused of being inferior. When women act like human beings, they are accused of behaving like men. De Beauvoir argues that women's exploitation is historical, and therefore amenable to change. As an existential situation, however, women are responsible for changing it. Liberation must be women's work. It is not a matter of appealing to men to give women their freedom, but a matter of women discovering their solidarity, rejecting the bad faith temptations of happiness, and discovering the pleasures of freedom... [23]. As long as the family and the myth of the family ... have not been destroyed, women will still be oppressed. And that a man attaches himself to a woman -- not to enjoy her, but to enjoy himself.

## **Ten Case studies of victims of femicide**

### **Case study 1: Uyinene Mrswetyana (2000-2019)**

A 19-year-old girl a student at the University of Cape Town media student was raped and murdered in cold blood reportedly by a 42-year-old man Luyanda Botha, a post office worker at Claremont Cape Town. The news of the young girls killing brought anger and a high level of frustration to the country continually observing senseless killings of women by men in South Africa. On 24 August 2019, Ms Mrswetyana has been told by Mr Botha that her parcel was not ready for collection and that she should come back later in the afternoon for its collection. Both had planned the attack in advance knowing that the post office closes around 1 PM. The Victim was held against her will inside the post where the attacker raped and attempted to strangle her before ultimately bludgeoning her to death with a two-kilogram weight targeting her head and knocking her unconscious. He returned the following day to retrieve her body and drove to a nearby field where he doused her body with petrol and set it on fire. Botha is an organized criminal because of his attempts to destroy evidence and leaves no traces of his evil acts of rape and murder. The victim's body was later recovered in a hole beside an unused railway track in the township of Khayelitsha.

Botha was convicted and sentenced to three life sentences with the possibility of getting a pao. The author is of the opinion that Botha circumstance does not merit parole. Society will be safer if he spends the rest of his life in jail without any release [24; 25].

### **Case study 2: Tshegofatso Pule**

In June 2020, the body of Ms Tshegofatso Pule was found shot brutally stabbed in the chest and left hanging on a tree at Durban Deep Roodepoort Johannesburg. Pule was 28 years and 8 months at the time of her untimely death. She was last seen alive while getting into a cab which her boyfriend (Ntuthuko Shoba) had summoned for her. The boyfriend hired a hitman (Muzikayise Malephane) for about \$700 to kill her to conceal his extra marital affairs. On 29 July 2022, Shoba was sentenced to life in prison and the hitman sentenced to 20 years in prison. The author is of the opinion that 20 years sentence expected to run concurrently is too lenient for the hitman. Literally, he will walk out free in less than ten years for taken two innocent lives, Ms Pule and the unborn child. The sentence imposed is a miscarriage of justice itself and a mockery of our criminal justice process and the rule of law [26; 27].

### **Case study 3: Karabo Mokoena**

Karabo Mokoena was 22 years old female murdered by her boyfriend Sandile Mantsoe 29 at the time of incident. In an attempt to conceal her body, Mantsoe burnt her body and left the remains in a field at Lyndhurst in Johannesburg. When the body was found, there was 60% body parts missing, suspicion that her deaths may have been a planned ritual killing. Mantsoe was a fraudster who defrauded several people to invest of saving schemes that never existed. He also lived a very ostentatious lifestyle above his means. Described by the prosecutor as heartless, arrogant, and remorseless. He killed Ms Mokoena in his flat, put her body in wheeling refuse bin but was caught on CCTV in the residential building taking the conceal remains of his girlfriend. He was described as a very jealous and possessive lover. Mantsoe was handed down a 32-year sentence by the South Gauteng High Court on May 3, 2018 [28].

### **Case study 4: Sibongiseni Gabada**

Sibongiseni Gabada, 36, went missing two weeks before her decomposing body was discovered in a black refuse bag behind her boyfriend shack in Khayelitsha H Section on May 29 2020. Her boy (Sithembele Klaas) described by friends of deceased as a very possessive person and a control freak [29].

#### **Case study 5: Jabulile Nhlapo**

**Jabulile Nhlapo, on May 2018, 21-year-old** Unisa Bachelor of Education degree student, was shot dead at a student residence in Vanderbijlpark, south of Johannesburg, by her ex-lover Lebohlang Mofokeng, 30. She was found lying in a pool of blood. In May 2018, Mofokeng was handed a life sentence for the murder. He was also sentenced to five years' imprisonment for theft, four years for possession of a firearm and 18 months for possession of illegal ammunition.

**Case study 6: Nompumelelo Mthembu, 20,** died from burn wounds after Siyabonga Buthelezi, 32, the father of her two children, placed a tyre around her neck and doused her with petrol. In April, Buthelezi was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder.

**Case study 7: Hannah Cornelius, on May 2017, a 21-year-old student** at the University of Stellenbosch, was brutally raped and murdered by four men she did not know. Her body was found on the side of a road, near a wine farm outside Stellenbosch. In November last year, three men - Vernon Witbooi, Geraldo Parsons and Eben van Niekerk - were sentenced to life imprisonment each for the rape and murder.

**Case study 8: Priska Schalk, 29,** on February 2017, was found handcuffed and lying in a pool of blood at her Joburg CBD home on Commissioner Street. She had been stabbed to death by her husband Zacharia Mojela, 28. He used several knives, and two of them were still lodged in her chest when her body was discovered. Mojela was given a 20-year imprisonment [29].

#### **Case study 9: Naledi Phangindawo**

Naledi Phangindawo, a 25 year -old Mossel bay mother of three and health ethisiast was murdered outside the home of her boyfriend Mondli Ntlangulela. Ntlangulela handed himself to the police in Strands few days after the murder. The victim was hacked all over her body and face. She has previously taken out a protection order against her ex-boyfriend. Prior to the incident, it was reported that Ntlangulela had previous physical assault incidents with Phangindawo.

#### **Case study 10: Shongile Pretty Nkhwashu**

Ms Nkhwashu was an intern doctor who was killed by her boyfriend (Ntiyiso Xilumane) during an argument. There was argument between the deceased and Xilumane resulting out of a threat of breaking up with him. He claimed in a scuffle, he grabbed her by the throat and threw her on the bed when she stopped moving, he used her stethoscope to check whether she was dead. Xilumane left her body in her room at the doctors residence where it was only discovered when someone went to investigate a bad smell coming from the room. The victim leaves behind a young son who she had with the man who has confessed to killing her.

#### **Case study 11 Reeva Steenkamp**

On Valentine's Day 2013, Reeva Steenkamp was shot dead by boyfriend Oscar Pistorius, Para-Olympic Athlete at his home in Pretoria. He stated that he thought an intruder has broken into his house, hiding in the bathroom. Pistorius was found guilty of culpable homicide at first trial and was sentenced to five years in prison. The National Prosecution Authority and the state appealed the conviction after his sentencing. In the minds of many, Justice Masipa erred. Women and gender activists are especially disappointed, and rightfully so. For Masipa, her judgement is based on the evidence presented to her as prescribed by South African law. Masipa's judgment is nevertheless frustratingly perplexing. She found him guilty of discharging a firearm in public, arguing that whether intentional or not, he was responsible and should have known better since he was trained in handling guns. The Supreme Court of Appeal

overturned this conviction and instead convicted Pistorius for murder, years of imprisonment was increased from 5 -13 years for murder.

### ***Conclusion***

The government of the Republic of South Africa is not doing enough to end the madness of the killing of women, the author sees this as reason he is prepared to go on a hunger strike rather than to remain silent in hide in shame and guilt for doing nothing. The author observed over a period of a decade in South Africa of several attempts made by the government to address the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide, but the strategies have not yielded the desired results. Women continued to be killed daily in South Africa by men. The author argues that it is high time the government and the citizens of South Africa come up with a lasting solution to femicide. The extreme killing of women deserves an extreme solution. Panadol cannot be used to cure cancer illness. What we need in South Africa right now, is a zero-tolerance punishment towards femicide perpetrators. No kidding, as a united society, we must collectively declare all-out war against all killers of women. Several thousands of women have lost their lives in the hands of callous men. The author is also calling for a drastic measure suggesting a constitutional change in the law allowing for women to bear arms for self-protection. As protective provisions by law enforcement officers to protect women have failed to stop high numbers of femicide victims in South Africa.

### ***Conflict of interest***

The author has no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

### ***Acknowledgement***

My heart goes to every woman that has been murdered in South Africa by a man. Also, to the families of the bereaved. Prison sentences, monetary compensation does not replace deaths of loved ones. The author would like to support the legacy of all victims and to keep their names alive. The article is written in the hope that it reaches the right audiences globally. Thanks to all law enforcement officers who have made it possible for these human hyenas to be kept behind bars. Rest in Power to all victims of femicide.

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