

Gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada, 2011 to 2021

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From 2011 to 2021, an average of 102 women and girls were victims of gender-related homicide per year in Canada, totalling 1,125 over the period.

For the purpose of this analysis, gender-related homicides of women and girls are defined as solved homicides committed by a male accused who was an intimate partner or a family member of the victim, sexually assaulted the victim as part of the homicide, or killed a victim identified as a sex worker by police.

The *Juristat* article "[Gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada](#)," released today, presents information on the victim, accused and incident characteristics of gender-related homicides.

Most gender-related homicides of women and girls are committed by an intimate partner or a family member

During the 11-year period included in the analysis, two-thirds (66%) of women and girls who were victims of gender-related homicide were killed by an intimate partner. Just over one-quarter (28%) of victims were killed by a non-spousal family member, who was most often the victim's son (49%). Of these intimate partner and familial homicides, nearly half (48%) involved a history of violence documented by police.

A small proportion of gender-related homicides against women and girls involved victims who were identified as sex workers (6%) or who were sexually assaulted as part of the homicide (4%).

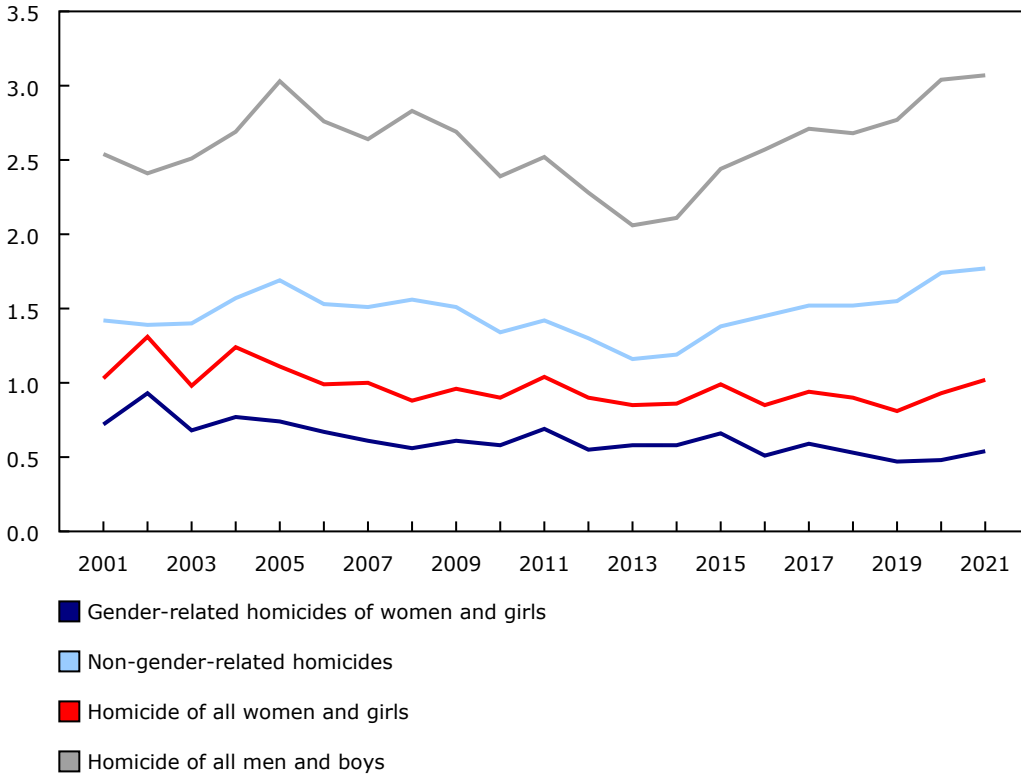
Slight increase in gender-related homicide of women and girls from 2020 to 2021

Compared with 2020, the rate of gender-related homicide of women and girls increased 14% in 2021 (from 0.48 in 2020 to 0.54 victims per 100,000 women and girls in 2021). In contrast, the rate of non-gender-related homicide increased 2% over the same period. Overall, the rate of gender-related homicide of women and girls has generally declined since 2001.



Chart 1
Rate of homicide, by presence of gender-related criterion and year, Canada, 2001 to 2021

rate per 100,000 population



Note(s): Gender-related homicides of women and girls are solved homicides committed by a male accused who was an intimate partner or family member of the victim, inflicted sexual violence on the victim as part of the killing, or killed a victim who was identified as a sex worker. Non-gender-related homicides are all those that do not contain the above qualifiers. There may be a small number of homicides included in a given year's total that occurred in previous years. Homicides are counted according to the year in which they are reported to Statistics Canada. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims and accused where gender was coded as unknown.
Source(s): Homicide Survey (3315).

Rate of gender-related homicide twice as high in rural areas compared with urban areas

From 2011 to 2021, the average rate of gender-related homicide was more than two times higher in rural areas (1.05 victims per 100,000 women and girls) compared with urban areas (0.47) in Canada.

Moreover, a higher proportion of female victims of gender-related homicide in rural areas (33%) were killed with a firearm compared with those killed with a firearm in urban areas (18%). In contrast, a greater proportion of female victims of gender-related homicide in urban areas (39%) died by stabbing compared with those killed by stabbing in rural areas (22%).

One in five people accused of committing a gender-related homicide die by suicide

Just over one in five people accused of a gender-related homicide (21%) died by suicide, a proportion seven times higher than those accused of a non-gender-related homicide (3%). People accused of a gender-related homicide were less likely to have a criminal history known to police (48%) compared with those accused of a non-gender-related homicide (65%).

The rate of gender-related homicide is three times higher among Indigenous women and girls

In 2021, the gender-related homicide rate of Indigenous women and girls was more than triple the rate of gender-related homicides overall (1.72 per 100,000 Indigenous women and girls vs. 0.54 per 100,000 women and girls). Despite comprising 5% of the female population in 2021, Indigenous women and girls accounted for 17% of all gender-related homicide victims in that year.

In addition, from 2011 to 2021, a larger proportion of Indigenous victims of gender-related homicides were aged 18 to 24 years (23%) and died by beating (40%) compared with the victims of gender-related homicide of women and girls overall (12% and 21%, respectively).

Note to readers

The data presented in this article are drawn from the Homicide Survey, which collects police-reported information on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused people in Canada. This survey began collecting information on all murders in 1961 and was expanded in 1974 to include all incidents of manslaughter and infanticide. The term "homicide" is used to refer to each single victim of homicide. For instance, a single incident can have more than one victim; for the purpose of this article, each victim would be counted as a homicide.

In some cases, homicides become known to police months or years after they occurred. These incidents are counted in the year they become known to police. Information on people accused of homicide is available only for solved incidents (i.e., where at least one accused has been identified). Information is updated accordingly when a case is solved.

The current analysis uses the concept of gender. Before 2019, Homicide Survey data were presented by the sex of the victims and accused people. Gender refers to the gender a person publicly expresses in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment, or in the broader community. Given that small counts of victims and accused people reported being or were identified as being non-binary, these people have been distributed to either men or women categories based on the regional distribution of victims' or accused people's gender to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

It is possible the data presented in this article underestimate the percentage of victims who were sex workers. This information is recorded by police if sex work was known to be the victim's primary occupation or if the homicide was related to their occupation as a sex worker, even if it was a secondary source of employment.

Defining Indigenous identity

For the purposes of the Homicide Survey, Indigenous identity includes people identified by police as First Nations people (either status or non-status), Métis or Inuit, and people with an Indigenous identity whose Indigenous group is not known to police. Non-Indigenous identity refers to instances where the police have confirmed that a victim is not identified as an Indigenous person. Indigenous identity reported as "unknown" by police includes instances where police are unable to determine the Indigenous identity of the victim or where the Indigenous identity is not collected by the police service.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3302](#) and [3315](#).

The article "[Gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

Also released today is the infographic titled "[Police-reported gender-related homicides of women and girls in Canada, 2011 to 2021](#)," available as part of the series *Statistics Canada – Infographics* ([11-627-M](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).