

Court outcomes in cases of gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada

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Nearly 6 in 10 persons accused of committing a gender-related homicide (58%) were found guilty of at least one charge in cases completed from 2009/2010 to 2020/2021.

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

The *Juristat* article released today, titled "[Court outcomes associated with the gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada, 2009/2010 to 2020/2021](#)," examines how these cases are processed through the criminal court system. The article also examines how these cases' outcomes compare with those of non-gender-related homicides of women and girls (homicides of women or girls with no evidence of the gender-related criteria mentioned above) and with homicides of men and boys.

Nearly 1,200 charges linked to cases of gender-related homicide completed in court, and most are charges other than homicide

From 2009/2010 to 2020/2021, a considerable proportion of charges linked to gender-related homicide were for other related offences, rather than specifically for homicide. A total of 1,171 charges were completed in court within 440 gender-related homicide cases. Of these charges, close to half (46%) were for homicide, of which 79% were for murder and the remaining 21% were for manslaughter.

In addition to the homicide charges completed in court, 21% of charges linked to gender-related homicides were for other associated violent offences (e.g., attempted murder, aggravated assault, a sexual offence) and the remainder were related to property crime and other violations more generally.

In comparison, a smaller proportion of charges were for the specific offences of murder or manslaughter in cases of non-gender-related homicides of women and girls (33%) and homicides of men and boys (37%).

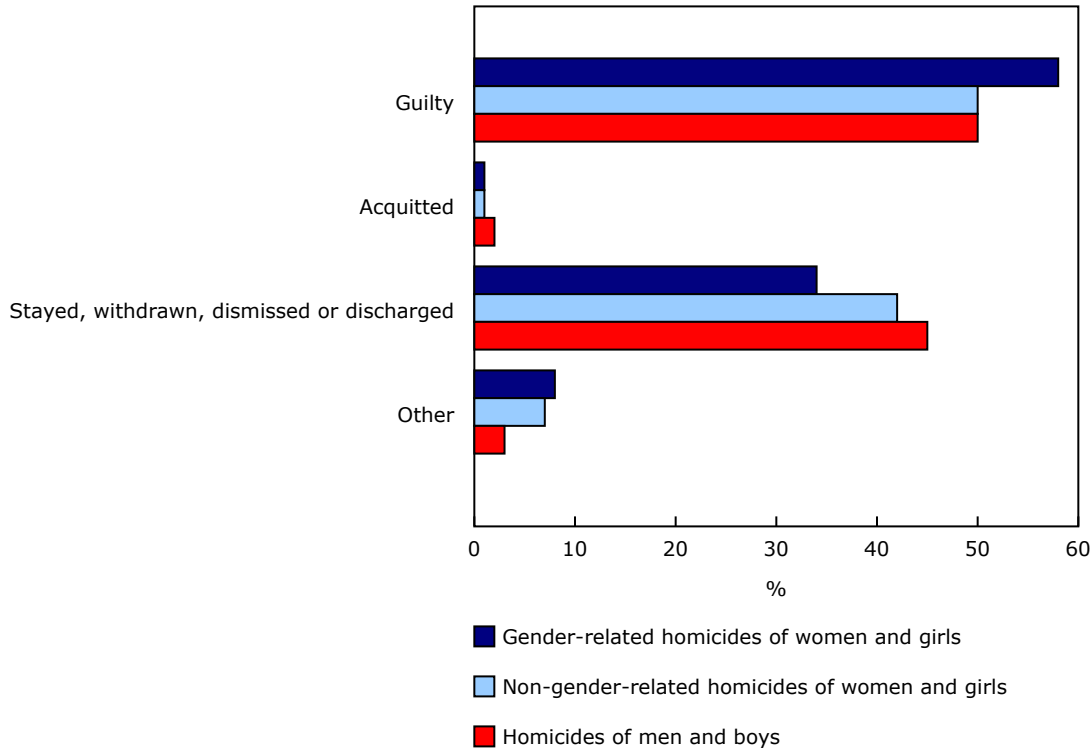
Gender-related homicides are more likely to end with a guilty finding than other types of homicide

From 2009/2010 to 2020/2021, 58% of persons who were accused of committing a gender-related homicide were found guilty of any charge in the case. This proportion is higher than that found among persons accused of a non-gender-related homicide of a woman or girl (50%) and among those accused of the homicide of a man or boy (50%).



Chart 1

Cases linked to police-reported homicides completed in court by gender-related status and court outcome, criminal courts, 2009/2010 to 2020/2021



Note(s): Gender-related homicide cases are solved homicides committed by at least one male accused who killed at least one female victim who was an intimate partner or family member of the accused, who was sexually assaulted during the killing, or who police identified as a sex worker. Non-gender-related homicides of women and girls are all those that do not contain the above criteria but involve at least one female victim. Homicide cases of men and boys require that no female victims were killed in the same incident. Victims and accused persons for whom gender was reported as unknown by police are excluded from this chart. Represents all completed cases successfully linked to a homicide reported by police in Canada from 2009/2010 to 2020/2021. Incidents may not have been linked to court data for multiple reasons, including survey coverage and time required to complete a case. See "Data sources and methodology" in the *Juristat* article for more details about the linkage and methodology.

Source(s): Homicide Survey (3315) and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (3312) linked file.

It is of note that these proportions changed over time. Specifically, over a six-year period, from 2009/2010 to 2014/2015, 52% of persons accused of committing a gender-related homicide were found guilty of at least one charge in the case. This proportion is slightly lower than that of persons accused of a non-gender-related homicide (55%) and of those accused of a homicide of a man or boy (53%). Over the more recent six-year period, from 2015/2016 to 2020/2021, a larger proportion (61%) of persons accused of a gender-related homicide were found guilty of at least one charge in the case. This figure was higher than the proportion of accused who were found guilty of a non-gender-related homicide of a woman or girl (48%) or a homicide of a man or boy (48%).

Adults convicted in a case of gender-related homicide and sentenced to custody receive longer sentences than adults convicted of other types of homicide

From 2009/2010 to 2020/2021, 93% of adults convicted in a gender-related homicide were sentenced to custody with an average sentence length—after credit was given for pre-trial custody—of 12.5 years.

Similar proportions of adults convicted of a non-gender-related homicide of a woman or girl (92%) and those convicted of a homicide of a man or boy (92%) were sentenced to custody. However, the remaining sentences, after credit was given for pre-trial custody, were shorter (average of 9.2 years for adults convicted of a non-gender-related homicide of a woman or girl and 6.1 years for adults convicted of a homicide of a man or boy).

Note to readers

The Homicide Survey collects police-reported data on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada. The year 2019 marked the first cycle of collection of the Homicide Survey data for which information on gender identity was reported for victims and persons accused of homicide. 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 persons reported or were identified as being non-binary, these persons have been distributed to either "men" or "women" categories based on the regional distribution of victims' or accused persons' gender in order to ensure the protection of confidentiality and privacy.

The Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS) collects information on adult and youth court cases involving Criminal Code and other federal statute offences. The primary units of analysis in this study focus on charges and cases linked to police-reported homicides. Cases and charges can link to multiple incidents or victims if they are processed by the courts within a single case.

To understand how charges related to the gender-related homicides of women and girls are processed within the Canadian criminal court system, police-reported data from the Homicide Survey were linked with data from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and the ICCS to allow for the analysis of how incidents moved through the court system. Homicides reported by police from 2009 to 2021 where there was at least one accused person identified and charges were laid or recommended by police were considered in scope and were linked to the ICCS data files for the fiscal years 2009/2010 to 2020/2021. Homicides that were uncleared (unsolved) and homicides where an accused was identified but no charges were laid (cleared otherwise) were excluded from the study since these incidents did not move to court. Of note, a report was released recently that examined court outcomes of homicides involving Indigenous women and girls, using the same linked data file and presented similar analyses (please see [Burczycka and Cotter 2023](#)).

According to the Homicide Survey, there were 1,030 women and girls who were victims of a gender-related homicide from 2009 to 2021 where police laid or recommended charges against at least one accused person in the incident. Of these, 44% were successfully linked to at least one charge in court. This linkage rate was comparable with those for non-gender-related homicides of women and girls (47%) and homicides of men and boys (49%) over the same period.

There are limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings, namely data coverage in the ICCS, which has a particularly notable impact on data for homicide cases and charges appearing before the courts, and elapsed time between an incident and the completion of a court case. It is also possible that incidents are not successfully linked because of missing or incomplete information in one or more of the files.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3312](#) and [3315](#).

The article "[Court outcomes associated with the gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada, 2009/2010 to 2020/2021](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

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).