

Research Article

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THE STATISTICAL DATA OF FEMICIDE IN THE WORLD AND TURKEY DOES REFLECT THE TRUTH? DÜNYA'DA VE TÜRKİYE'DE KADIN CİNAYETLERİ İSTATİSTİKİ VERİLERİ GERÇEKLERİ YANSITIYOR MU?

ABSTRACT

The development of human beings remains at the level of technology and regresses in the field of civilization. The biggest indicator of this situation is the existence of violence against women in all developed or developing countries and its increasing day by day. Violence against women is multidimensional. If this violence is not stopped, the deaths of women will increase day by day. To make the number of murders of women visible, the word femicide is used instead of the word homicide. In general, "femicide" means that women are killed mainly because they are women.

The purpose of this study is to examine national and international statistics on domestic violence and femicide in the world and our country from many original sources, provide current and accurate information to the world and in Turkey, to deal with the issue within the scope of international agreements and laws, interpreting positive studies and missing issues from a social service perspective and suggesting solutions. In this study, one of the qualitative research methods, the method of examining written documents were used. Documents such as national and international reports, books, researches, articles, statistics on the subject of the research have been systematically analyzed by checking their originality.

In the document reviews conducted within the scope of the research, it is seen that the databases of the countries are not very healthy in the number of cases of violence against women and femicides. Therefore, statistics of international organizations cannot go beyond estimates. Especially, it is seen that the number of femicides in our country is gradually increasing. It is noteworthy that the relevant institutions do not include the suspicious deaths of women in their statistics. Turkey, under Istanbul Convention, has made great strides in preventing violence against women. However, it is thought that withdrawing from Istanbul Convention may cause these gains to erode over time.

Keywords: violence against women, femicide, Istanbul convention, social work, feminist social work

ÖZET

İnsanoğlunun gelişmesi teknoloji boyutunda kalmakta medeniyet alanında gerilemektedir. Bu durumun en büyük göstergesi gelişmiş ya da gelişmekte olan tüm ülkelerde kadına yönelik şiddetin varlığı ve her geçen gün artmasıdır. Kadına yönelik şiddet çok boyutludur. Kadına yönelik şiddet durdurulmadığı takdirde kadın ölümleri her geçen gün artacaktır. Kadın cinayetlerinin görünür kılınabilmesi için homicide sözcüğü yerine femicide sözcüğü kullanılmaktadır. Genel olarak "kadın cinayeti/Femicide", kadınların temelde kadın oldukları için öldürülmesi anlamına gelir.

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, dünyadaki ve ülkemizdeki aile içi şiddet ve kadın cinayetlerine ilişkin ulusal ve uluslararası istatistikleri birçok orijinal kaynaktan incelemek, dünya ve Türkiye hakkında güncel ve doğru bilgilere ulaşmak, konuyu uluslararası anlaşmalar ve kanunlar kapsamında ele almak, olumlu çalışmalarını ve eksik konuları sosyal hizmet perspektifinden yorumlamak ve çözüm önerileri sunmaktır. Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan yazılı belgeleri inceleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma konusu ile ilgili ulusal ve uluslararası rapor, kitap, araştırma, makale, istatistik gibi dokümanlar özgünlükleri kontrol edilerek sistematik olarak analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırma kapsamında yapılan doküman incelemelerinde kadına yönelik şiddet vaka sayısında ve kadın cinayetlerinin sayısında ülkelerin veri tabanlarının çok sağlıklı olmadığı görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla uluslararası kuruluşların istatistikleri de tahminlerden öteye gidememektedir. Özellikle ülkemizdeki kadın cinayetleri sayısının giderek arttığı görülmektedir. İlgili kurumların şüpheli kadın ölümlerini istatistiklerine dahil etmediği dikkati çekmektedir. Türkiye İstanbul sözleşmesi kapsamında kadına yönelik şiddeti önleme konusunda büyük adımlar atmıştır. Ancak bu anlaşmadan çekilmesinin zamanla bu kazanımların erozyona uğramasına neden olabileceği düşünülmektedir.

INTRODUCTION

As in the world, violence, domestic violence, and as a result of this, femicide is increasing day by day in our country. Although it is claimed that we live in the most modern ages of human history, the primitive motives of man still come to the forefront, his failure in anger management and acting with the motive "the strong is right" refutes this claim. A person's right to life is the most important, as written in the UN declaration of human rights. Ending of the right to life within the family, which is expected to be the healthiest and safest place, is very surprising, but it is a reality. The guarantee of the right to life is the state and laws. The state has to fulfill this duty, which is the reason for its existence, together with its institutions in the best way. The purpose of this study is to examine national and international statistics on domestic violence and femicide in the world and our country from many original sources, provide current and accurate information to the world and in Turkey, to deal with the issue within the scope of international agreements and laws, interpreting positive studies and missing issues from a social service perspective and suggesting solutions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Barker (1999, p. 511) defines the word *violence* with the following sentences in the social work dictionary. "The use of force that often results in injury or psychological problems. The expression 'crimes of violence' relates to the crimes in which physical harm occurs or is threatened, such as *aggravated assault, rape, and homicide*"

Violence is a multifaceted phenomenon and a social problem, as it includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic elements and is classified into different types. Barker (1999, p.137) defines the word *domestic violence*, "The social trouble in which one's life, health, or property are harmed or endangered as a result of the intentional treatment of other family member."

Istanbul convention (p.8) defines *domestic violence* as follows.; "domestic violence refer to all acts of psychological, sexual, economic, or physical violence that be formed between current or former spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares the one housing with the victim". Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women published by UN on 20 December 1993, *violence against women* was defined with the following sentences. "Any act of gender-based violence that consequence in, or is likely to consequence in, psychological, sexual or physical hurt or trouble to women, including intibitation of such acts, enforcement or high-handed lack of liberty, whether take place in public or private life"

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In the Istanbul convention (2011, p. 8) published on 12 April 2011, it is defined Women includes girls under the age of 18. Therefore, femicide should be evaluated within the age range specified in this definition.

Violence against women is often perpetrated by a close partner. The perpetrators can be present or ex-boyfriend, wife, husband or girlfriend; couples living separately or together; young or old people (Levy, 2008, p. 5).

In cases where violence against women cannot be averted by the state, femicide, which is the most farthest point of violence against women, rises. Usually, femicides occur when violence by close partners is not reported to the authorities and goes unpunished.

The use of the term "femicide" is important for understanding hostile violence against women. The term femicide was first used in Brussels in March 1976 by feminist writers Diana Russell and Nicole van de Ven at the First International Court of Crimes Against Women. The main goal of the term is to show that the violent deaths of women are a crime that should not be confused with the term "homicide" independent of gender and to raise awareness on this issue (Corradi et al., 2016, 2).

In general, "femicide" means that women are killed mainly because they are women. The change in concept is closely related to the country you live in and how the culture of this country views femicide. For example, while the European Union uses the term femicide, the term homicide is used in the USA and Canada (World Vision, Nov 17, 2020). Some countries accept that any killing of a woman is femicide. However, others argue that the murder should be based on gender in order to be called femicide.

Russell (2001, p. 13) states that men commit these murders for sexist purposes. For this reason, the definition of femicide includes hatred towards women, the feeling of superiority towards women, or the motivations of overly possessive attitudes towards women.

Violence against women (and femicide), one of the concrete manifestations of the patriarchal regime, is present in all contemporary societies. Based on this fact, the deep-rooted structure of patriarchy should not be underestimated. Because the patriarchal regime is a social and historical institution rather than a psychological or personal problem, and it is the masculine gender's way of exercising domination (Mojab, Abdo, 2006, p. 3).

Campbell (1992, p. 109) states that one of the most important motivations of men, when they commit femicide, is jealousy. The jealousy that men show can be an expression of their efforts to control and have the women they are close to (or want to be). For this reason, femicides fed by the motivation of jealousy can be made "forgivable" under the patriarchal tradition.

Femicide is a widespread social trouble and a growing human rights problem in all societies and cultures at the global, national, and local levels (McCary, Lombard, 2016, p. 128).

Constitution of the Republic of Turkey "people's immunity, tangible and intangible" assets as defined in Article 17 guarantees everyone's right to life. It guarantees that nobody will be "subjected to any punishment or treatment incompatible with human dignity". But, gender-based violence is a breaking of this constitutional right. The state has certain responsibilities to prevent this violation (Altınay & Arat, 2008, p. 11)

Studies show that possession of firearms plays an important role in lethal violence (Nowak, Krcmar, Farrar, 2008, p. 257). Also, research has shown that firearms as well as the murders using an ax or sharp-edged tools, strangling, committed by stabbing or poisoning women or forcing suicide (WHO, 2012).

Generally, gathering correct data on femicide is difficult. In as much as in most countries, government agencies mostly do not have the essential information about femicide cases.

Media can be an important tool for constructing meaning and perspectives, labeling, producing stereotypes, or gaining approval or disapproval of violence. Therefore, in some cases, journalists may be partners in concealing the dynamics of

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femicide (Campbell, 1992, p. 110).

The latest international convention to stop violence against women is "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence". Whereby it was opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011, it is known as the "Istanbul Convention". Turkey first signed on 11 May 2011 and was the first country to ratify the convention in parliament. Unfortunately, Turkey was the first state to terminate Istanbul Convention on March 20, 2021. When the entire Istanbul Convention is examined, it is seen that the words and concepts of homicide or femicide are not included.

THE METHOD

In this study, one of the qualitative research methods, the method of examining written documents were used. Within the scope of the research, providing data by analyzing written documents containing information about the facts and events related to the subject under investigation is called document review. A lot of information about the researched area can be obtained through document review without the need to interview and observe. In this way, the researcher saves time and resources (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p. 188).

DATA COLLECTING

Documents such as national and international reports, books, researches, articles, statistics on the subject of the research have been systematically analyzed by checking their originality. Based on the data obtained from the documents, the subject of the study was explained and the data were made meaningful. Besides, the subject was tried to be presented realistically with the numerical data discussed in the study. Domestic violence and femicide statistics from 2000 and after were used in the study. The biggest problem regarding the subject is the lack of a database established at the national level yet.

THE FINDINGS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The dark road to femicide passes through the abundance of violence against women. It would be beneficial to first share the statistics on violence against women to have a projection on femicide. In the document reviews, it is seen that the cases of violence against women given by the countries are not based on health data. In the footnotes written under the statistics on this subject, it is stated that the cases reported to police stations, courts, and hospitals are recorded in statistics. Also, some statistics do not include girls under the age of 18, while others state that they include those up to the age of 15. Girls under the age of 15 are not mentioned in any document.

Be countries, sides, when the foreign and national doctoral thesis studies and articles were examined, it was seen that they benefited from the World Health Organization publications and research results made in some

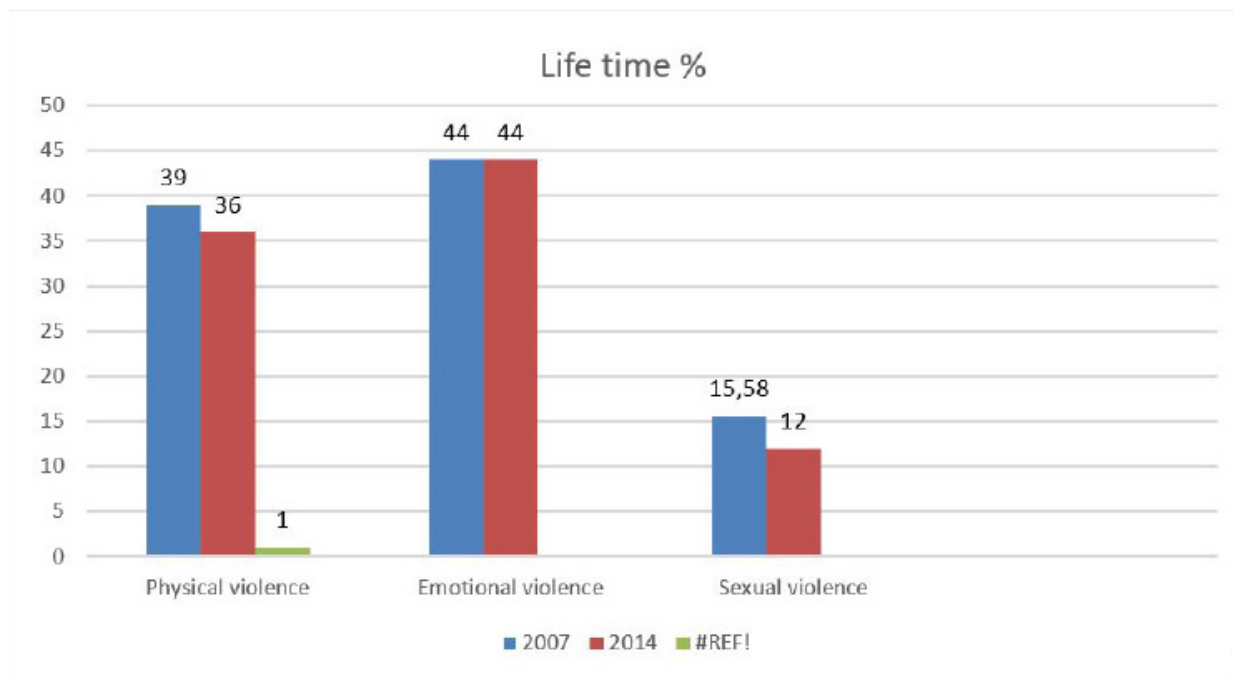
Recent estimates point out that globally one-third (37%) of women experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence at a time in their life (WHO, 2018). It is seen that similar results have been obtained in many other studies (UN Women, 2021; WHO, 2021; UN Women & UNDP, 2020; United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, 2015; World Bank Group, 2020).

Violence against women results in critical short and long-term mental, physical, sexual, and seminal health problems, and leads to great social and economic costs for women, families, and societies.

Research on Domestic Violence against Women (2014) in Turkey, the prevalence of domestic violence suffered by women, forms of violence, why is the most comprehensive research conducted throughout the country to understand the risk factors with the results. The first research in this field, representing the country in general and included in the Official Statistics Program, was carried out by a consortium including Hacettepe University Population Studies in 2007. Carried out in 2014, "Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey" is the second study similarly to represent the overall country.

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Table 1: 2007-2014 research violence against women in Turkey



Some data relating to Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey 2007 and 2014 survey results are as follows (Altınay & Arat, 2007; Research on Domestic Violence against Women, 2014):

- In the 2014 study, the rate of women who were subjected to physical violence by their spouse or ex-spouse in any period of their life throughout the country is 36% (8% in the last twelve months). It is seen that this rate is 39% in the 2007 research.
- The rate of women who have experienced emotional violence in any period of their life is 44%. It is observed that this rate did not change in 2014 and 2007 studies.
- In the 2014 study, the rate of women who have been subjected to sexual violence in any period of their life is 12% (5% in the last twelve months). In the 2007 study, this rate is seen as 15.58%.

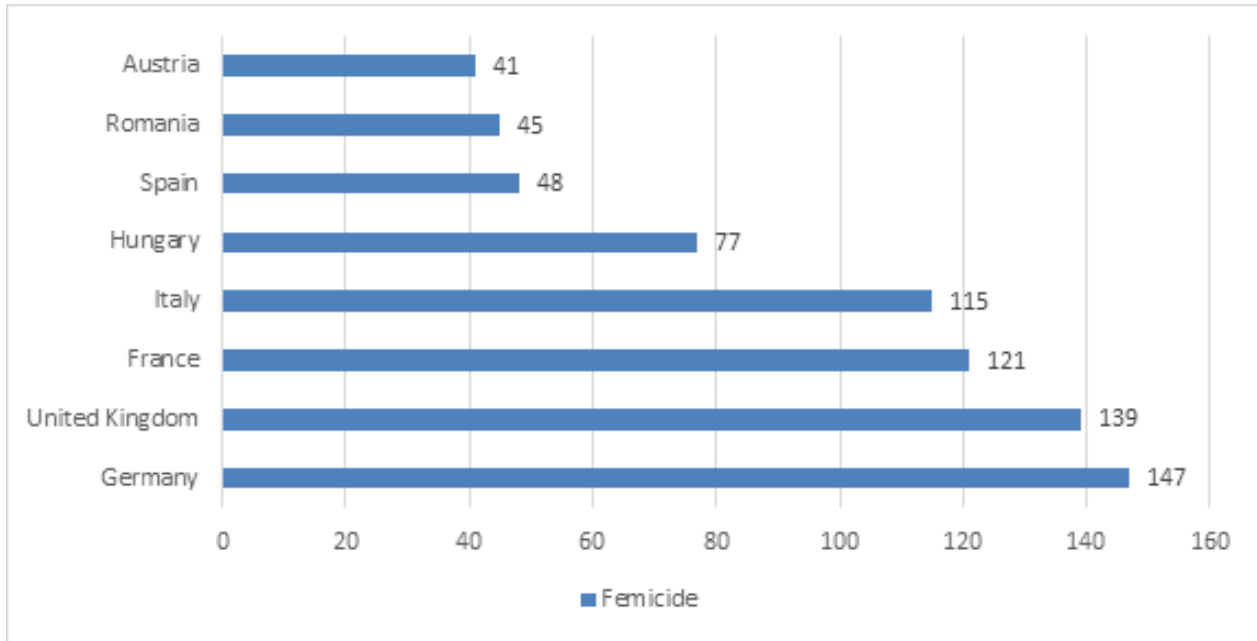
It is noteworthy that the studies were conducted only on married and divorced women. Violence against unmarried women and girls under 18 years of age has not been studied. Apart from these two studies, no new research has been done yet. Since the statistics on this subject are not shared with the public by the state institutions, the news reflected in the media is used as a source by non-governmental organizations.

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Femicide, which symbolizes to the gender-related killing of women and girls, stands for the furthestmost cases of violence against women. Femicides are becoming widespread and on the rise all over the world.

The statistics on femicide in 2018 published by the European Union in 2020 are given in table 1 (Statista, 2021a). Under these statistics table, there is the statement "European Union countries publish these data openly as they sign the Istanbul Convention".

Table 2: Countries with femicide cases in the EU in 2018

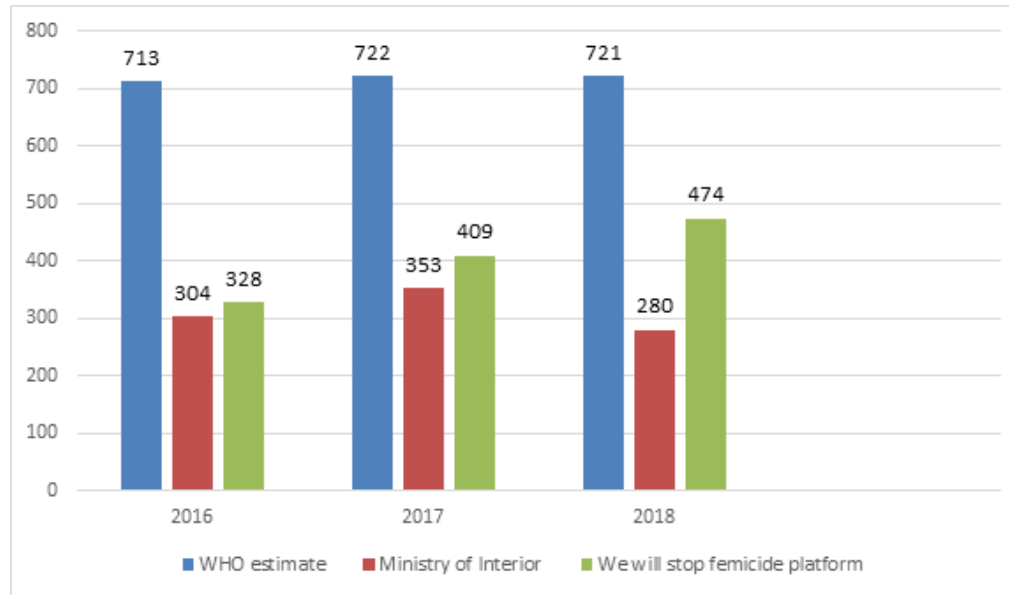


In 2018, many European countries witnessed a large number of reported murder cases of women. Femicide with declared to be 147 cases in Germany, 139 in the UK, 121 in France, 115 in Italy, 77 in Hungary, 48 in Spain, 45 in Romania, 41 in Austria, 40 in Bulgaria, 36 in Belgium, 33 in Slovakia, 30 in Serbia, 28 in Switzerland. The names of the countries with a lower number of femicide cases are as follows: 28 in Portugal, 22 in Sweden, 18 in Finland, 15 in Czechia, 12 in Lithuania, 9 in Slovenia, 8 in Croatia, 8 in Albania, 7 in Ireland, 6 in Greece, 6 in Kosova, 6 in Norway, 5 in Estonia. Of course, it is necessary to evaluate these numbers with the female population of the countries. If we include the UK, the total number of femicides in 29 European Union member states is 1,050.

Cases of femicide are widely prevalent in Turkey with a rising trend. Although Turkey is among the countries signatory to the Istanbul convention, it is not easy to reach statistical data for researchers. These statistics are not found on the official websites of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Family and Social Services, and TÜİK. These numbers are shared with the public from time to time by the ministers through a press release on the 25 November days of combating violence against women.

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Table 3: Femicide statistics in Turkey



"Femicide Estimates by Country" statistics published by the WHO, the information shown in the table is as follows: in 2016 Turkey 713, in 2017 Turkey 722, in 2018 Turkey 721 (WHO, 2021).

The data given by the interior minister at the press conference "on the 25 November day of combating violence against women" are as follows; 304 in 2016, 353 in 2017, 280 in 2018. (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, November 16, 2019)

In the study of Taştan and Yıldız (2019), these figures are stated as follows. In 2016, 2017, and 2018, a total of 932 femicide cases were reported, of which 726 were police and 206 were recorded by the gendarmerie. The number of cases of femicide by year is as follows; 301 in 2016, 350 in 2017, 281 in 2018.

It is seen that the number increased from 301 in 2016 to 350 in 2017 and decreased by 69 to 281 a year later. The change in femicide between 2016 and 2018 was 118. Such a large change in such a short time may be an indication that the records are not kept accurate enough.

According to the data obtained from the "We will stop femicide platform" website (2021), which publishes the data they gathered from newspaper reports and the denunciations they received, femicide in Turkey is stated as follows over the years. In 2016, 328 femicide information was received. In 2017, 134 of 409 murders of women are cited as suspicious deaths. In 2018, 131 of 440 murders of women are cited as suspicious deaths. In 2019, 115 of 474 murders of women are cited as suspicious deaths. In 2020, 171 of 471 murders of women are cited as suspicious deaths. In the first three months of 2021, 45 of 124 murders of women are cited as suspicious deaths.

According to data provided by the Hope Foundation (2021), 373 women were killed in Turkey in 2020 and 263 women were injured.

According to the data compiled by the femicide platform (2021) only from newspaper reports, it is stated that 261 women in 2016 and 285 women in 2017 were killed by men.

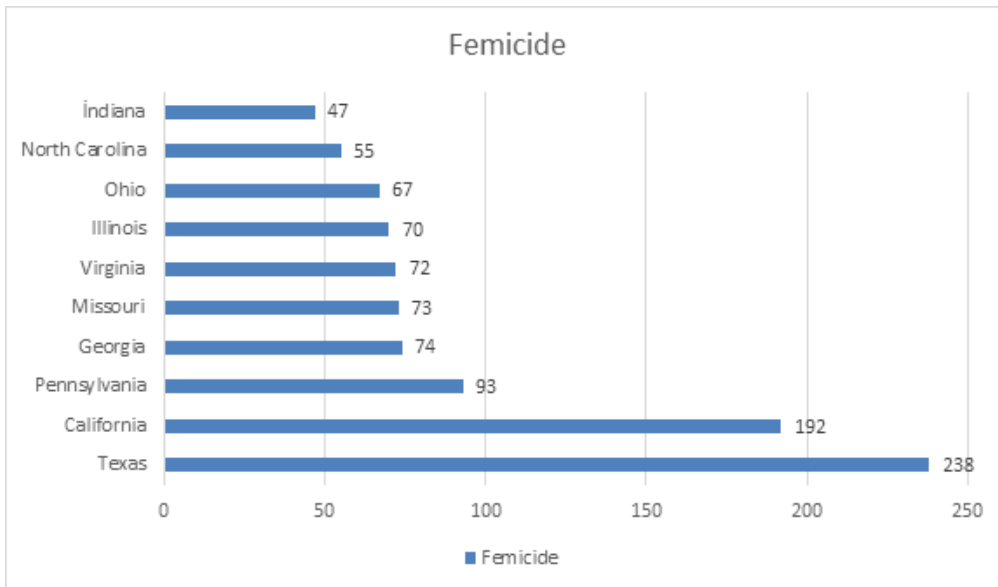
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Local media in Turkey is not common. The femicide news is generally followed by the main media. The data collected by women's associations should be evaluated accordingly. Relevant institutions of the state need to fully identify murders of women and share this with the public. It does not seem possible to solve the problem without revealing the magnitude of the problem.

Of course, we do not yet know the number of women injured, disabled, in need of care, and psychologically impaired in these data. The death of each woman is a drama for their children, mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, whom they left behind.

If we include the UK for 2018, it is seen from the statistics that the total number of femicides in 28 European Union member states is 1050. In 2018, the population of the EU is approximately 513 million people. In 2018, Turkey's population of 82 million people. If the population of the European Union compared with the number of murders of women, and we compared the results with the population of Turkey, Turkey needs to take additional measures to reduce the 168 murders of women in the short term.

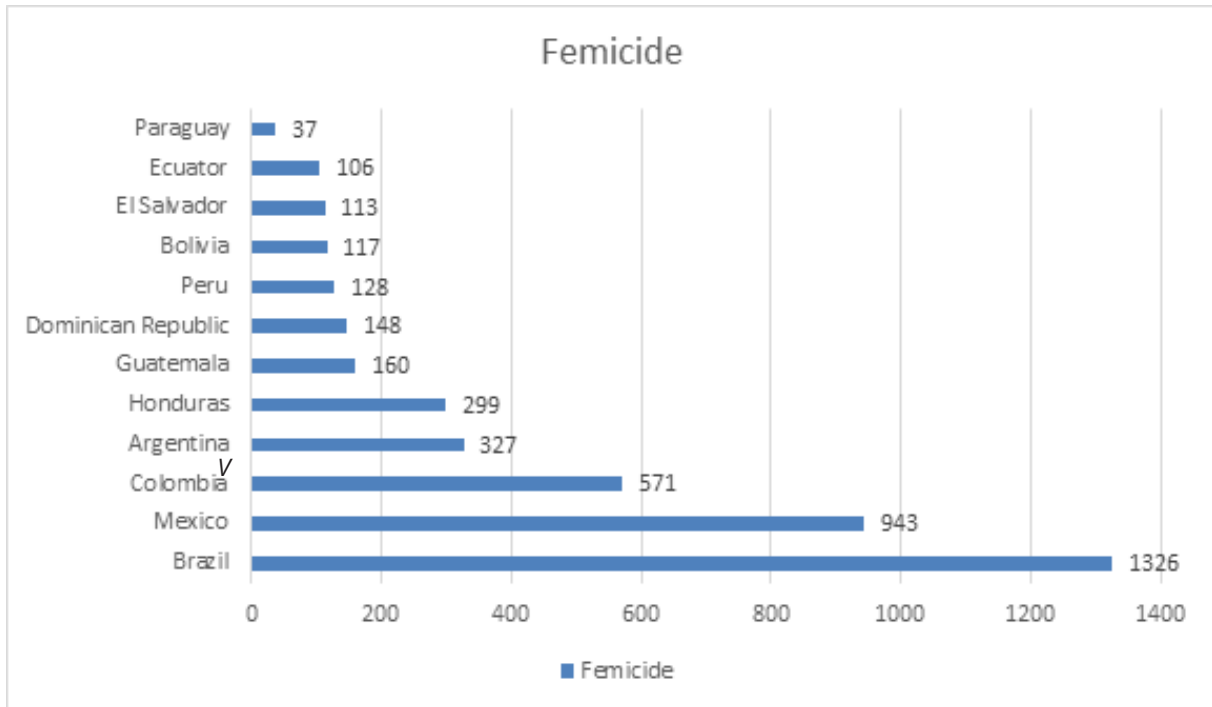
Table 4: Number of femicide in the U.S. in 2018



Data were not available from the states of Alabama and Florida. If the missing data are not taken into account, the number of femicides that could be detected in 2018 is 1,946 (Statista, 2021b). It is not overlooked that the United States of America can not collect reliable data on femicides covering the whole country.

Table 5: Latin America: number of femicide in 2019

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It is clearly seen from the table that Brazil ranked first with 1326 femicides among Latin American countries. Mexico follows Brazil with 943 femicides (Statista, 2021c).

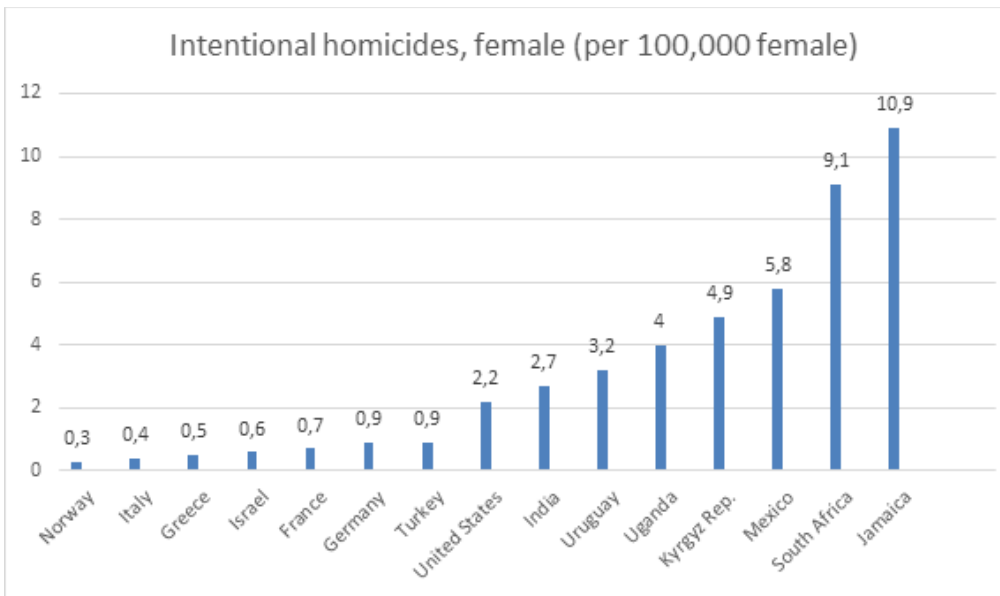
Table 6: The world average of femicides



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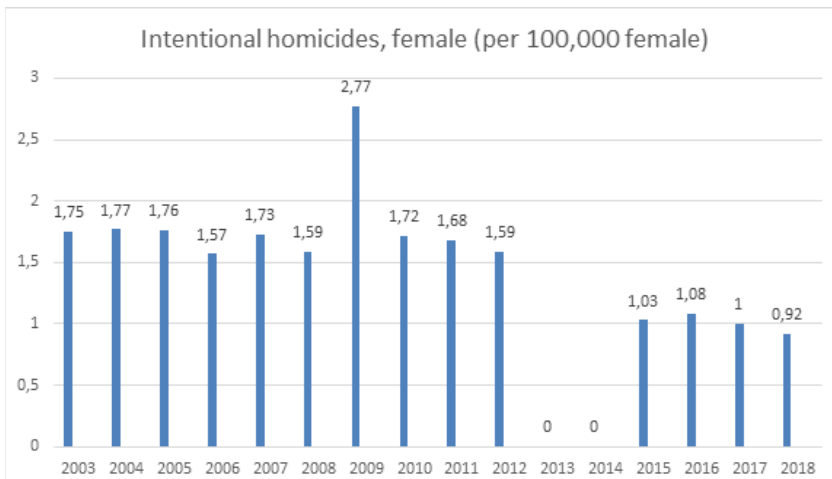
It is seen that the world average of femicides, which was 2,872 in 1993, dropped to 2,173 in 2018. (World Bank, 2021).

Table 7: Female murder rates in some countries (World Bank data)



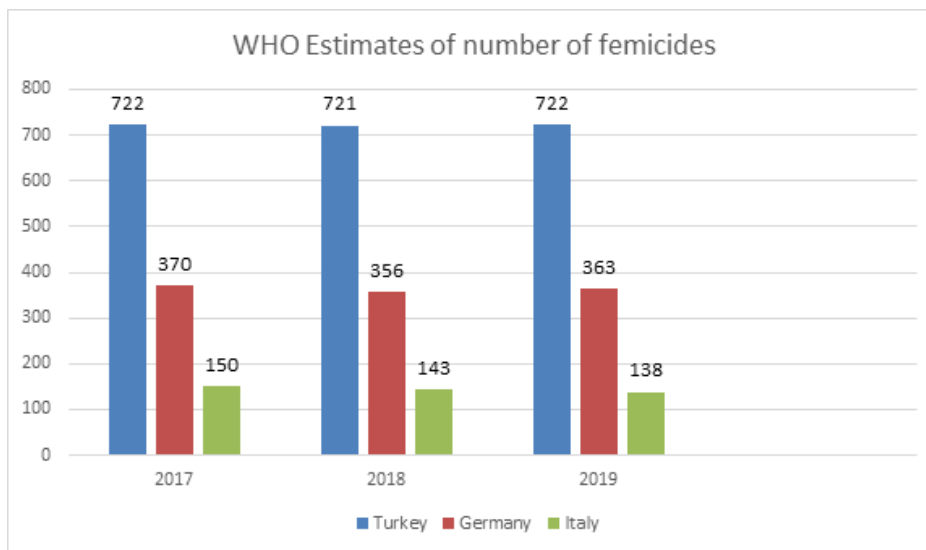
It is seen that the statistical information published by the World Bank (2021) is not compatible with the number of femicides obtained from the Statista website. For example, Turkey and Germany have also shown that the average (0.9) is not compatible with Statista data. In this case, confusion occurs. The statistical data reported by the countries to the World Bank and World Health Organization should be controlled to higher standards.

Table 8: Female murder rates in Turkey (World Bank data)



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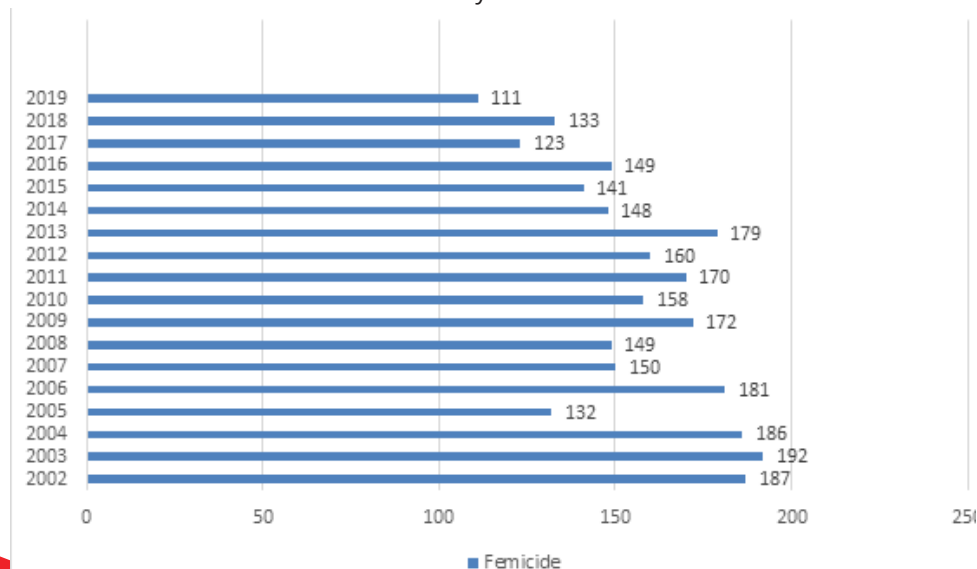
It is seen that many countries have shared their femicide data with the World Bank (2021) since 1990. However, Turkey began to share data from 2003. Also, data for 2013 and 2014 are not included in the table. It is seen that the data in 2003 remained generally stable until 2008, and for 2009 it doubled suddenly. It is observed that the number of femicides has been decreasing continuously since 2009. However, official data and data collected by non-governmental organizations contradict this situation.



When we compare three countries from "Femicide Estimates by Country" statistics published by the world health organization (WHO, 2021), the information shown in the table is as follows: in 2016 Turkey 713, Germany 359, Italy 150; in 2017 Turkey 722, Germany 370, Italy 150; in 2018 Turkey 721, Germany 356, Italy 143; in 2019 Turkey 722, Germany 363, Italy 138.

The number of Turkey and Germany, as seen in the table is twice the statista and other statistics. The numbers of Italy are in line with other statistics.

Table 10: Number of femicides in Italy 2002-2019



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It can be seen from the table that there were 111 femicides in Italy in 2019. When years are compared in the table, there has been a noticeable decrease in femicide in recent years (Statista, 2021d). The number of murders of women in Turkey is high and does not decrease. It is noteworthy that after the Istanbul convention, the number of femicides has decreased in Italy.

When we compare three countries from "Homicide Estimates by Country" statistics published by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021); the murder of men from women murders in Turkey is estimated to be more than 4.5 times. This ratio is estimated as 1.16 in Germany and 1.96 in Italy. Also in the data of the World Health Organization (2018); Four fifths of the 477000 murders committed worldwide in 2016 are men. In the statistical data of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2019); In 2016, it is estimated that 50,000 of 87,000 women were killed by their intimate partners across the world under femicide criteria.

It is seen that the number of murders in Turkey is very high. Compared to other countries, it is seen that the number of men who died in murders is quite high. Therefore, it is clearly seen that the number of femicides is higher than in other countries. Turkey, firstly, measures should be taken for the reduction of violence and murder; deterrent applications should be made and education of the society should be given priority.

CONCLUSION

In the document reviews conducted within the scope of the research, it is seen that the databases of the countries are not very healthy regarding the number of cases of violence against women. The most important reason for this is considered to be that the vast majority of women subjected to violence do not file a complaint with official authorities and do not go to hospitals. The information provided by the countries to international organizations is not reliable, as their databases are lacking. Therefore, the number of cases of violence against women cannot be accurately compared between countries.

Many studies measuring lifelong violence against women under the leadership of the World Health Organization cannot reveal the truth due to the support of countries, budget constraints, and the small number of participants. The number of cases of violence against women is usually only estimates based on research and makes up the tip of the iceberg.

Unless violence against women is made visible, the problem grows exponentially and random solutions are insufficient to solve the problem. It is necessary to dry the problem at its source. Since all kinds of violence against women cannot be prevented, femicide is increasing rapidly all over the world, whether developed or not.

All issues related to the detection and reduction of violence against women are valid for femicide. Besides, since the suspicious deaths of women are not reported in the data sent, it is seen that the statistics published by international organizations and countries are not compatible with each other. There are many reasons for femicides, and these murders are mostly committed by intimate people who should protect and watch over them.

It is thought that it is great unfortunate for our country to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention these days when all countries should make joint efforts to reduce femicide. The fact that a national-level study to fulfill the requirements of The Istanbul Convention has not yet been carried out causes concerns that femicides may continue to rise. Also, the legal regulations made within the scope of this agreement are likely to be eroded over time. A national effort should be made to stop violence against women in accordance with the culture and conditions of our country as soon as possible. Within the scope of this national work, laws with high deterrence should be enacted and murderers should be kept in prisons for a long time. During these studies, valuable social service faculty members and social service experts of our universities trained in our country should be used. In addition to many theories of social work, feminist social work theory should also be used in these studies.

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