

No More Stolen Sisters: Addressing Femicide Against Indigenous Women and Girls. Africa and Arab States Regional Report

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ARC Centre of Excellence for the
Elimination of Violence Against Women



NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS: ADDRESSING FEMICIDE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS.

AFRICA AND ARAB STATES REGIONAL REPORT





Traditional Custodians

The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and UNFPA acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our various nodes stand and whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture these lands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend our respects to all Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and other Indigenous peoples around the world.

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UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, works to uphold the rights and choices of women, girls and young people across more than 150 countries. UNFPA strives to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

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Abstract

This report presents a summary of the discussions, insights, and recommendations from the Africa and Arab States regional roundtable on *No More Stolen Sisters. Addressing Femicide Against Indigenous Women and Girls*, hosted by CEVAW and UNFPA. High rates of impunity for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and femicide persist due to state inaction and systemic failures in justice systems, which are reinforced by communal systems where women are pressured to remain silent about their experience of violence. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a particular challenge, often normalised and dismissed as "correction" or family issues. The highest femicide rates are for women and girls with disabilities. Due to lack of trust in formal systems, culturally grounded healing approaches are vital for truth-telling, collective healing, and restoring women's agency. There is a need to integrate Indigenous reporting and justice mechanisms alongside formal systems, whilst ensuring survivor protection, consent, and human rights safeguards.

1. Introduction

Femicide, the gender-related killing of women and girls, represents the most brutal form of gender-based violence. While it affects women and girls in all regions, Indigenous women and girls face a disproportionate and racialised burden of femicide, fuelled by the intersection of gender-based violence, systemic racism, colonial legacies, and State inaction or complicity.

From North to South America, from the Pacific to the Arctic Circle, Indigenous women and girls are at heightened risk of femicide, often at the hands of intimate partners or family members. However, they can also be victimised by actors outside their communities, including state agents, non-Indigenous individuals, and the broader impacts of industries such as resource extraction. These industries may not directly perpetrate violence but can contribute to increased risks of exploitation, displacement, and gender-based violence, creating conditions that heighten the vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to femicide. This violence is not only personal but collective: it reverberates through families and communities, eroding cultural continuity, community resilience, and collective memory. Effective responses to femicide must therefore extend beyond individual cases to include culturally grounded, community-led strategies for healing and resilience, centred on justice, memory, and the restoration of dignity.

Violence against Indigenous women and girls often occurs in contexts of extreme vulnerability and poverty rooted in racism and structural discrimination, including those shaped by armed conflict, the militarisation of Indigenous territories, forced displacement and migration, the suppression of cultural practices, and the criminalisation of indigenous women defenders of land and the environment. These conditions are reinforced by intersecting systems of patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and hegemonic economic models that disproportionately affect Indigenous women, their territories, and their peoples, and that constrain the full exercise of their participation, power, and rights.

Femicide against Indigenous women and girls remains inadequately addressed. In some cases, it is rendered invisible through misclassification, erasure in biased or incomplete data systems, or neglect by authorities. In other contexts, it is made hyper-visible in ways that pathologise Indigenous communities and justify punitive state responses, rather than fostering accountability or healing. The lack of disaggregated data, the invisibility of systemic drivers such as racism and colonialism in quantitative analysis, and the failure to centre Indigenous voices and knowledge in prevention strategies contribute to continued harm.

It is essential to recognise that intergenerational trauma, rooted in colonial violence and state marginalisation, contributes to the over-representation of Indigenous women and girls as victims, and men as perpetrators. These same historical forces have also shaped the conditions under which some Indigenous men may be both marginalised and criminalised, often without adequate support or access to healing. While men of all racial and cultural backgrounds commit violence, the pathologisation of Indigenous men must be understood within a broader context of state violence, racism, and structural neglect. Colonial histories profoundly impact the stories of communities and their relationships with state authorities, significantly eroding trust and engagement and affecting access to justice. Consequently, the issue of impunity must be understood as a state and systemic failure to protect and respond, not as an indictment of communities that have themselves endured structural violence, exclusion, and generations of harm. Therefore, these historical contexts are crucial for bridging perspectives, supporting robust risk mitigation and effective case management systems, and developing effective strategies to prevent femicide and address its underlying risk factors while holding all perpetrators accountable.

In December 2024, UNFPA, in partnership with UN Women and UNODC, and with support from the kNOWVAWdata initiative and the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems, convened the first Global Expert Group Meeting on Addressing Femicide: Measurement and Accountability. This three-day roundtable brought together experts to advance a collective approach to

understanding and preventing femicide, identifying key areas to strengthen data systems, case management, and prevention mechanisms.

In order to support an ongoing platform for convening to address femicide, UNFPA in partnership with the Australian Research Council Centre for Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEVAW), an interdisciplinary, Indigenous-centred research centre dedicated to addressing the full range of violence against women in the Indo-Pacific, convened regional dialogues (January and February 2026), followed by a Global Expert Group Meeting (April 2026), focused specifically on femicide against Indigenous women and girls, to amplify Indigenous voices, address the systemic drivers of this violence, and support the co-creation of data, justice, and prevention approaches rooted in Indigenous leadership, feminist decolonial frameworks, and the lived realities of victims' families (see Appendix 1).

2. Purpose and Method of a Regional Dialogue

The regional dialogues took place exclusively online and were structured around three regional sessions—covering the Americas; Asia and the Pacific; Africa and the Arab States – followed by a global merger session comprises those participants who wish to represent the region. This format was designed to provide a safe, accessible, and inclusive space for in-depth, regionally grounded dialogue on femicide against Indigenous women and girls.

We have attached the format that guided each dialogue (Appendix 2). The first hour was dedicated to developing a shared understanding of femicide grounded in community contexts from representatives' lived experience. The second and third hours were dedicated to breakout sessions where individuals self-selected the topics and conversations that they would like to contribute to, on issues such as data governance, data systems, data collection, intergenerational trauma, early warning, system-level prevention and response. The dialogue then concluded with final reflections and recommendations. These dialogues were transcribed and then analysed for report compilation by a team from UNFPA and CEVAW. Each report seeks to capture, in participants own words, as much as possible, their reflection and knowledge of definitions, experiences, actions, and recommendations. We have deidentified the data to ensure that individuals are protected from reprisals due to direct quotation and adhered to the data storage recommendations per the recommendations of the human ethics review board (Griffith University HREC/2026/0020).

Those who attended and participated in the dialogues applied, via an application form, in the final quarter for 2025. The application called for participants who could contribute to a regional and global dialogue on Indigenous experiences and knowledge of femicide. Selection prioritised those who are working with communities in a practitioner, research or advocacy role. There was a particular effort made to ensure that representation came from local, 'grassroots' representatives - that is, people who may not have had the opportunity to attend or present at the international level on this topic in forums such as the UN Human Rights Council and UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

3. African and Arab States Regional Context

Regional Context and Specificities

- Colonial and post-colonial legacies in Africa and the Arab States are structural drivers of femicide, rooting the violence in intersecting issues like colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and intergenerational marginalisation. Intergenerational trauma is deeply rooted in this colonial violence, land dispossession, and state marginalisation, which profoundly shape the experiences of Indigenous communities and women.
- Territorial dynamics, rooted in colonial legacies, have stripped Indigenous women of land ownership, leading to them being viewed as property and placing them at risk of being killed in property struggles. The denial of land rights creates structural vulnerability to violence from partners, the military, non-state actors and the police.
- High rates of impunity for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and femicide persist due to state inaction and systemic failures in justice systems, which are reinforced by communal systems where women are pressured to remain silent about violence. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a main challenge, often normalised and dismissed as "correction" or family issues. Systemic devaluation leads to the highest femicide rates for women and girls with disabilities.

4. Conceptualising Femicide in Indigenous Contexts

- **Terminology Gap:** 'Femicide' is often considered an urban term (e.g. Nairobi); in rural spaces and Indigenous communities (e.g. Nigeria), it is generally categorised and referred to as gender-based violence (GBV), with femicide being defined and recorded as an 'extreme incidence' of GBV (e.g. honour killings, kidnapping of schoolgirls etc.)
- **Intersectionality:** For Indigenous communities, femicide is viewed as rooted in intersecting issues like colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and intergenerational marginalisation.
- **Cultural Celebration:** In Kenya, femicide is sometimes celebrated by culture, dance and music. This was highlighted using the axe symbol by men on profiles and in music/dance as a display of masculine pride following a woman's killing.
- **Definition across languages:** Definition challenges include the difficulty of translating 'gender' into Arabic, where 'sex' is a more commonly used term, especially when discussing femicide.
- **Perpetrators:** While the perpetrator is often an intimate partner, in Indigenous communities, the perpetrators can also be outsiders or part of non-state actors/armed groups (as seen in Sudan), deliberately taking advantage of Indigenous women's vulnerable status. There is a need for an understanding of impunity that extends beyond individual perpetrators.
- **Patriarchy:** As broad similarities across the African region, men are seen as providers, with violence against women being dismissed as correction, discipline or personal family issues that should not be shared with outsiders.

- **Communal Systems:** In settings such as Nigeria and Tanzania, communal living and extended family structures exert pressure on women to maintain silence regarding GBV and femicides, often to avoid 'demonising' a male relative, such as a brother or father. This dynamic results in cases being concealed and unreported. Furthermore, in remote communities, such as the Maasai, where strong communal practices prevail, the frequency of femicides or child deaths resulting from traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) is often obscured, as remoteness and cultural norms impede formal reporting.
- **Elders:** The first response to femicide is often to speak to elders for resolution, not to pursue justice or hold the perpetrator accountable.
- **Police Attitudes:** When women report GBV, police officers often question them, undermine their claims with patriarchal attitudes, and cause them to withdraw.
- **Impunity:** A lack of accountability is created by the 'grey zone' that exists in the interplay between the jurisdiction of the nation-state and Indigenous community leaders, which allows both to justify inaction on femicide.
- **Religion:** The weaponisation of religion to normalise GBV is evident in Nigeria, where reported femicides include cases where women were killed for cooking cow meat. In the religious context, femicide can also be a consequence of cultural norms, where violence, sometimes lethal, is perpetrated by women against other women.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Indigenous women and girls with disabilities face the highest rates of femicide, driven by intersecting oppressions like disability-related marginalisation, poverty, and systemic devaluation.
- **Lack of Prioritisation:** Gender and femicide issues are not prioritised by politicians, leading to the absence of state houses and state inaction, such as the historic lack of a gender cabinet secretary in Kenya and the absence of a framework for constitutional gender rules.
- **Resource Disparity:** Women lack resources to pursue justice, while men, who traditionally control resources, can afford to 'buy themselves out of a situation'.
- **Colonial Legacies on Land Ownership and Justice Systems:** Colonial legacies dispossessed women of land ownership. In contexts like Nigeria, women were stripped of their maternal identity and forced to adopt their husband's name, contributing to their perception as property. This historical objectification continues to manifest in violence against women, particularly in disputes over property rights, including femicide. The legacy of colonialism in Tanzania (e.g. constitution), is blamed for limiting the representation of women in government, where men ultimately decide policies and fail to prioritise women's and girls' needs. At both national and grassroots levels, women lack genuine power or safety to speak, facing violence and being disproportionately affected by issues like colonial conservation policies that lead to forced evictions and endanger their fight for land rights (danger to confront the military and the police).
- **Media Narratives:** The media contributes to the dismissal of violence by portraying men as victims (drunk, unemployed) and victim-blaming women (killed because they were after money or complaining).
- **Private Sector:** Accountability and responsibility of companies, particularly those involved in violence related to extractive industries, remain weak despite the existence of social responsibility laws in their home countries, largely due to lack of enforcement and regulatory capture.
- **Information Access:** Technology use is focused on urban areas; rural and Indigenous women, including those with disabilities, lack access to information on GBV, femicide, and helplines.
- **Invisibility of Rural Incidents:** Technology and media publicise only high-profile incidents. The voices and cases of women in rural areas are not heard or documented, and national data dashboards for grassroots organisations are no longer functional.

5. Indigenous-led Data Governance, Evidence, and Memory

Quantitative Data: Visibility and Harm

- **Data Gaps and Systems Interconnection:** Current data systems lack the intersectionality and disaggregation needed to specifically identify and understand femicide against Indigenous women. Femicide must be officially defined and included in all official statistics and administrative databases (e.g. police, health). The disconnection between these data systems prevents timely intervention and results in preventable femicides. Integrating these systems and additionally capturing attempted femicides is critical for prevention and system accountability.
- **Community-Led Monitoring and Ethical Reporting:** Given the difficulty in collecting data in areas with limited police control (urban vs. rural areas where incidence might be higher), community-led monitoring systems like those established in Canada, the US and Australia are vital, placing data collection control within the community itself. The involvement of Indigenous women can help ensure that data is used for advocacy and prevention without flattening experiences or reinforcing harmful stereotypes, while maintaining respect for the victims. Reporting must not cause more harm and must include a social norm and behaviour change.
- **Automatic death reviews** (e.g. Australia), offer a valuable method for collecting systemic data on victims, perpetrators, crimes, system failures, and services. It is essential that review teams include Indigenous women to ensure their perspectives are integrated into the analysis of relationships and intersectional issues.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** AI offers both substantial risks and opportunities for capturing data on femicide and must be explored further.
- Data systems need to capture **femicides as a specific category**, disaggregated by categories such as indigenous, ethnic or religious minority, disability status and other intersectional categories.
- Monitoring of femicides of Indigenous women needs to be **co-led by Indigenous communities**, who need to be supported to report cases without fear of further stigmatisation.
- National governments need to allocate resources **to institutionalise systematic death reviews** that include Indigenous women in review teams.
- Data systems need to be **interconnected** to capture attempted femicides for prevention purposes.

Qualitative Data, Storytelling, and Lived Memory

- **Insufficiency of Quantitative Data and Lack of Trust:** Numbers alone underrepresent the scale and nature of femicide and gender-based violence (GBV) because women often distrust or are reluctant to report violence through formal systems that have historically failed them. Systemic barriers to recognising qualitative data include lack of trust and time, stigma, language/literacy constraints, and limited capacity for ethical analysis. Qualitative data reveals hidden realities with stories, testimonies, and lived memory providing the depth, context, and truth that statistics cannot - especially since many Indigenous societies are rooted in oral traditions.
- **Qualitative data supports collective healing:** Storytelling, particularly in women-only spaces, helps reduce isolation, break denial, foster empathy, and accelerate healing by validating lived experiences. Indigenous women are more likely to share experiences through face-to-face engagement in safe, trusted environments.
- **Narrative evidence challenges colonial narratives:** Storytelling allows communities to reclaim history, restore women's agency, and challenge colonial narratives that have erased or distorted historical examples of Indigenous women's resistance and leadership.

- **Prioritise Indigenous data governance** by centring Indigenous leadership and ownership in the collection, analysis, and governance of qualitative data. Utilise methods such as testimonies, oral histories, feminist cartography, and memorialisation to facilitate truth-telling and healing.
- **Invest in culturally sensitive, language-appropriate engagement and trust-building** with Indigenous women and girls. Provide necessary resources and capacity support for ethical **qualitative data collection** and analysis, including fair compensation for participants' time.
- Utilise qualitative evidence to strengthen the implementation of existing policies by using **qualitative evidence to inform action**, enhance accountability mechanisms, and develop effective prevention strategies.

Bridging Quantitative and Qualitative Data Systems

- **Non-Extractive and Ethical Data Collection:** Data collection should not be "extractive" (like healthcare practices often are). Indigenous communities should be empowered and trained to collect their own data to ensure they benefit and increase sustainability and positive impact.
- **Consent and Privacy:** Prioritise the safety and dignity of Indigenous people, ensuring data storage is consensual and that individuals are not filmed or recorded without consent. A data privacy agreement for storage, use, and access is essential.
- **Language Integrity:** Caution must be exercised in translating natural languages (e.g., Massai of Kenya) into English, as artificial intelligence can distort the narrative. Data should be preserved in its own language.
- **Consequence of Storytelling:** Practitioners must be careful about the potential consequences of storytelling, as exposure can reduce safety for vulnerable groups.
- **Co-Creation and Localised Solutions:** By moving beyond extraction, civil society work should shift from simply recording data to co-creating solutions with the community through workshops. This ensures solutions (like toolkits for responders) are locally understood and use terminology that the community appreciates.
- **Cultural Engagement:** Access is determined by culture. Organisations should lean into local systems, such as consulting with village chiefs to mobilise people and communicating GBV cases to them with the intention of finding shared solutions.
- **Creative Advocacy:** Techniques like visual storytelling (documentaries screened in markets) and the use of songs and words in Indigenous communities are effective for collecting evidence of violence while also promoting better livelihoods. When using creative advocacy, images of women should not be shown for safety reasons.
- **Challenging the Normalisation of Silence:** Intergenerational dialogues help to combat the normalisation of silence, where mothers and grandmothers endure violence and do not educate the next generation. These 'hard conversations' are necessary to understand the systemic causes of violence and promote societal healing.
- **Inclusivity:** When collecting data, women with disabilities must be included in group discussions, as isolation limits their contribution to research and ability to be heard.

6. Intergenerational Trauma, Impunity, and the Need for Systemic Prevention and Response Mechanisms

Intergenerational Trauma

- **Structural Roots of Vulnerability:** The intersection of ethnicity and land exclusion (e.g. rural contexts in Kenya), means women are barred from inheriting property, leaving the widow vulnerable and displaced. This denial of land rights functions as a tool of patriarchal control, reinforcing the narrative of land being a masculine power asset.
- **The Cycle of Violence and Forced Dependency:** Trauma and violence are transmitted through a cycle of poverty and lack of education. Girls witness their mothers' experience of violence, which often leads to school dropout, early marriage, and subsequent exposure to intimate partner violence. Without independent skills or land ownership, women are forced to remain with abusive husbands, perpetuating the cycle for the next generation.
- **Culturally Grounded Healing:** Traditional clinical mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) often fails because women are uncomfortable in clinical settings. Culturally grounded healing is more effective, prioritising collective storytelling and group conversation circles where women can share their problems and acknowledge the trauma communally. Effective prevention is often initiated by "outsiders within", educated community members who return to challenge harmful customs while respecting cultural safety.
- **Barriers to Justice and Systemic Response:** Survivors face re-traumatisation within state institutions, encountering hostility at police stations and courts. The lack of safe houses forces survivors back into their villages where they are pressured to drop cases against local perpetrators, leading to high rates of impunity.

Impunity, State, and Systemic Failures

- **Impunity and Systemic Failure** are central drivers of femicide and violence against Indigenous women and girls, operating across the justice continuum from investigation to sentencing. Patriarchal norms, which prioritise 'family honour' over women's safety, are a key factor sustaining this impunity.
- **Barriers to Justice:** Significant gaps exist in policing and justice systems, including inadequate training and failure to properly record and classify femicide. Institutional bias, survivor disbelief, and failures to accommodate persons with disabilities remain major barriers.
- **Erosion of Trust:** Colonial legacies, systemic racism, and institutional neglect shape Indigenous communities' relationships with state authorities, eroding trust. Indigenous women often face impossible choices, fearing that reporting violence could lead to the incarceration of Indigenous men, removal of children, or community destabilisation.
- **Harmful Narratives:** Governments often frame violence as a 'cultural issue' instead of acknowledging state responsibility. Media narratives that pathologise Indigenous men by portraying them as inherently violent were criticised for obscuring structural causes of violence.
- **Need for Plural Justice:** The importance of plural justice systems, including Indigenous justice mechanisms, was emphasised as complementary to formal processes, provided they are grounded in survivor safety, consent, and human rights.

Strengthening Prevention, Early Warning, and Response Systems

- **Reporting Barrier within Communities:** Despite awareness programs, reporting remains low because women who report are often blamed. Therefore, significant effort is needed to establish an ethical and sustainable reporting system that fully protects those reporting from negative communal repercussions.
- **Cultivating Local Gender Champions:** Effective GBV work involves identifying and training passionate community members to serve as gender champions and facilitators.
- **Early Prevention:** Setting up safe spaces for young girls is key for early learning about their rights, relevant laws, and how to speak out against harm.
- **Promoting Best Practices:** It is vital to promote positive community practices to overcome harmful ones, which aids in early warning and sustainability.
- **Integrating Solutions into Community Systems and Engaging Leadership:** Organisations must learn and respect the Indigenous community's livelihood system and leadership structure (e.g. the Maasai leadership system) to ensure ownership of prevention and response programs. Crucially, community leaders and chiefs must agree that GBV is wrong. This creates opportunities, such as incorporating messages against beating women into traditional ceremonies (e.g. the Maasai celebration of young warriors becoming elders). For instance, in Nigeria, women's organisations such as 'Daughters of the land' and 'wives of the community' are proactively engaging with community leaders in discussions about the dangers of violence and are conducting health talks in educational and religious settings.
- **Religious and Health Mobilisation:** In Arab communities, religious leaders raise awareness in university settings about female genital mutilation, child marriage, and GBV. Women birth attendants are engaged as key GBV champions to educate and inform Indigenous women about attending hospitals for clinical checks, as women giving birth at home are at high risk.
- **Needed Focus on Men:** The main obstacle to addressing GBV is its normalisation, especially intimate partner violence, which is frequently excused as necessary 'correction'. Although education is important, even educated women face violence and are often hesitant to report it. Consequently, there is a strong need for more awareness initiatives specifically aimed at men, as they are the ones who 'make the law and execute the law'.

7. Conclusion and Regional Contributions to the Global Agenda

Priority Issues for Global Advocacy

- **Strengthen state accountability** by enforcing existing domestic violence laws, protocols, and sentencing standards. This includes investing in specialised training for police, prosecutors, and judicial actors on femicide, GBV, and survivor-centred approaches.
- Reform data systems to **accurately record and classify femicide, attempted femicide and violence** against Indigenous women and girls for prevention and response improvement.
- **Support and institutionalise the critical role of qualitative data**, storytelling and healing. Due to a lack of trust in formal systems, qualitative data (stories, testimonies, oral histories) is essential for truth-telling, collective healing, and restoring women's agency. Reinforce and fund culturally grounded healing approaches, such as formalising '**Group Conversation Circles**', as these are often more effective forms of mental health support than traditional clinical methods.
- Support **ethical media engagement** that challenges harmful stereotypes and amplifies Indigenous-led narratives of accountability and resilience.

- **Institutionalising intercultural justice** by working toward the formal recognition of Plural Justice Systems. Recognise and **integrate Indigenous reporting and justice mechanisms** alongside formal systems, ensuring survivor protection, consent, and human rights safeguards. This involves creating functional bridges between state law and Indigenous justice mechanisms to ensure that protection orders and safety protocols are culturally resonant and safe for women and girls to use.
- Ensure that the **‘No More Stolen Sisters’ movement remains community-led** by transitioning from global oversight to a model where regional and local reports are authored, reviewed, and circulated by the Indigenous practitioners and leaders who live these realities.

Recommendations for Collective Action

- Develop **community-accessible data dashboards** that track GBV cases from report to court verdict to help communities recognise these situations as traumatic, not normal.
- **Formalise and fund ‘Group Conversation Circles’** as the primary culturally sensitive psychological support mechanism.
- Facilitate **‘Intergenerational Exchange Forums’** to address cultural barriers that prevent youth from being seen as credible by elders, ensuring youth perspectives are integrated into prevention strategies without violating cultural respect.
- Strengthen **state accountability** by enforcing existing domestic violence laws, protocols, and sentencing standards. Invest in specialised training for police, prosecutors, and judicial actors on femicide, GBV, and survivor-centred approaches.
- Reform data systems to **accurately record and classify femicide** and violence against Indigenous women and girls.
- Support **ethical media engagement** that challenges harmful stereotypes and amplifies Indigenous-led narratives of accountability and resilience.
- Recognise and integrate **Indigenous justice mechanisms** alongside formal systems, ensuring survivor protection, consent, and human rights safeguards.

Appendix 1: Dialogues

Objectives

1. Define the meaning and scope of femicide for Indigenous communities, including culturally grounded definitions of family, relationships, and violence.
2. Identify the diverse structural and systemic drivers of femicide against Indigenous women and girls, including colonialism, racism, patriarchy, and state inaction or impunity.
3. Address gaps, invisibility, and bias in data systems related to violence against Indigenous women and girls, ensuring that Indigenous realities are accurately reflected.
4. Promote Indigenous data governance and sovereignty by ensuring community ownership over how data is collected, interpreted, and shared.
5. Strengthen the link between data and lived experiences by using storytelling, narratives, and memory as tools to transform data into action, fostering greater community ownership and public awareness.
6. Ensure that all data collection, use, and storytelling approaches are grounded in ethical safeguards, cultural safety, and trauma-informed practices, recognising the intergenerational impacts of violence on Indigenous communities.
7. Facilitate dialogue on justice, truth, and memory by supporting community-led initiatives that honour victims, preserve collective memory, and reclaim spaces through actions such as storytelling, feminist cartography, and memorialisation.
8. Identify entry points to strengthen prevention, protection, and response systems, including culturally safe early warning mechanisms, risk mitigation, and survivor-centred case management.
9. Foster solidarity and alliance-building among Indigenous movements, civil society, and UN agencies, driving a collective global call to action and strengthening partnerships that align community needs with essential services.

Expected Outcomes

- A synthesis of challenges and opportunities to improve the documentation, data collection, and visibility of femicide against Indigenous women and girls. This includes strategies to centre Indigenous voices within politically sensitive or state-controlled systems, as well as creative, rights-based approaches to evidence-sharing that remain effective across shifting political and institutional landscapes.
- Identification and promotion of good practices and promising Indigenous-led and feminist methodologies for data generation, justice, prevention, and healing — with a focus on safeguarding community ownership, cultural safety, and ethical integrity.
- Establishment of a living digital repository of resources, methodologies, testimonies, and community practices that honour victims, support collective memory, and bolster Indigenous-led advocacy for justice and prevention.
- Strengthened, sustained partnerships between Indigenous women-led organisations, feminist movements, and international actors to amplify Indigenous leadership, promote accountability, and build a unified global response to femicide.

Guiding Principles

- Centring Indigenous leadership and knowledge.
- Grounding dialogue in justice, truth, dignity, and healing.
- Upholding intersectionality and feminist decolonial approaches.
- Respecting lived experience and collective memory as data and evidence.
- Promoting solidarity, empathy, and global accountability.

Appendix 2: Regional Dialogue Agenda

Time	
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome, Opening Remarks, Introductions and Process Overview Purpose: To set a shared understanding of the objectives, principles, and participatory process for the roundtable. • Ground Rules • Explanation of the regional breakout structure • Agreement on regional representation Each region will identify three representatives, with one representative linked to each thematic session, to moderate and report • Agreeing on the structure for reporting back to communities
9:15 – 10:00	Session 1: Defining Femicide and Understanding Diverse Community Realities [Plenary Session] Objectives: • Explore how different Indigenous communities understand and define femicide, acknowledging diverse terminologies and lived realities. • Recognise that, in many contexts, femicide often occurs within the framework of family violence. It is important to consider that the concept of 'family' may be understood differently across cultures. For example, some Indigenous communities may define family more broadly than nuclear family structures, which has implications for how femicide is recognised, measured, and addressed. Therefore, it is important to define the meaning of family territory and territorial rights through a decolonised lens as part of the collective rights recognised for Indigenous Peoples. • Examine what femicide means within each community, recognising that definitions and manifestations are contextual and shaped by specific cultural, social, and historical realities. • Understanding to what extent technology plays a part in femicide in your region (e.g.: social media, tracking devices...) Session 1: Guiding Questions • Cultural Definitions: How does your community define the gender-related killing of women and girls, and are there specific local terms or concepts that better capture this reality than the term "femicide"? • The Concept of Family: Given that femicide often occurs within domestic contexts, how does your community's definition of "family" (e.g., extended kinship vs. nuclear structures) influence how violence is identified and reported? • Territory and Rights: In what ways do the concepts of "territory" and "territorial rights" intersect with the safety of Indigenous women, and how should a decolonised definition of these rights be integrated into our understanding of femicide? • Structural Drivers: How do the legacies of colonialism, systemic racism, and state inaction specifically manifest as risk factors for femicide within your region?

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	• Technological Impacts: To what extent are modern technologies—such as social media or tracking devices—being used to facilitate or exacerbate the risks of femicide in your community? • Invisible vs. Hyper-visible: How is femicide rendered "invisible" in your region (e.g., through misclassification), and conversely, in what ways is it made "hyper-visible" to pathologise Indigenous people rather than provide justice?
10:00 - 10:55	Session 2: Indigenous-led Data Governance and Control [Break out sessions] Objectives: • Introduce the concept of data governance, including its relevance in Indigenous contexts and its connection to self-determination, sovereignty, and justice. • Showcase Indigenous-led, feminist, and decolonial models of data governance that ensure community control over data collection, use, and sharing to establish a shared understanding among participants. • Examine how data has historically been used against Indigenous communities — including how institutions collect, frame, and use data in ways that perpetuate harm, erase lived realities, or reinforce dominant narratives, reaffirming the necessity of Indigenous data governance. • Share examples of successful initiatives that effectively depict lived memory and experiences through data-driven narratives. • Discuss the role of using data in storytelling in cultivating community ownership and enhancing understanding of distinct experiences. Breakout Discussions Participants will divide into three breakout groups to explore specific approaches to data: Group 1 - Quantitative Data: Reflect on the role of numbers in documenting femicide and gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls. Participants will explore the strengths and limitations of quantitative data in telling the story of systemic violence and discuss how numbers can both reveal patterns and risk flattening lived experiences. The session will critically consider how statistical data is collected, interpreted, and communicated, and how it can be reclaimed to serve Indigenous advocacy and truth-telling. Guiding Questions: • In your experience, how has quantitative data (statistics, prevalence rates, administrative data) been used to document femicide and violence against Indigenous women and girls? What has this data helped make visible, and what has it failed to capture? • How can we leverage Indigenous community-led monitoring to counter systemic 'data silence' and the under-reporting of Indigenous femicide in mainstream media? Can emerging AI tools be effectively decolonised to support these efforts, or does their reliance on written media data sources risk further erasing femicide cases involving Indigenous women? • How have numbers and indicators sometimes been used in ways that harm Indigenous communities (e.g. misrepresentation, stigmatisation, erasure, or policy misuse)? • What would it look like for Indigenous communities to lead the collection, interpretation, and use of quantitative data on femicide and gender-based violence?

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	• How can statistical data be framed and communicated in ways that support Indigenous advocacy and truth-telling, without flattening lived experiences or reinforcing harmful narratives? • What safeguards are needed to ensure that quantitative data is not weaponised against Indigenous women, families, or communities? Group 2 - Qualitative Data: Explore how stories, testimonies, oral histories, and other qualitative forms of knowledge are used to document and understand violence against Indigenous women and girls. Participants will discuss how qualitative data reflects lived realities, honours memory, and challenges dominant narratives. The discussion will highlight how narrative-based, oral history, and testimonial approaches to data preserve and communicate Indigenous knowledge systems and examine the opportunities and challenges of using these forms of data in policy, research, and advocacy spaces. Guiding Questions: • How do stories, testimonies, oral histories, and lived memory help document violence against Indigenous women and girls in ways that numbers alone cannot? • What makes qualitative data particularly important for honouring Indigenous knowledge systems, memory, and collective healing? • How can narrative-based and testimonial data challenge dominant or colonial narratives about violence, victimhood, and responsibility? • What are the main barriers to having qualitative and story-based data recognised and valued in policy, legal, and research spaces, and how can Indigenous-led approaches help overcome them? Group 3 - Bridging Quantitative and Qualitative Data Systems Discuss how the two forms of data can be combined to create holistic, community-rooted understandings of violence, healing, and resilience. Participants will examine integrated models that centre Indigenous voices. Guiding Questions: • What are examples, real or imagined, of ways quantitative and qualitative data can be combined to tell a fuller, more accurate story about violence, resilience, and healing in Indigenous communities? • How can integrated data approaches centre Indigenous voices and priorities, rather than treating qualitative data as “supplementary” to statistics? • What principles should guide Indigenous-led models that bring together numbers, stories, and lived memory? • How can combined data approaches support accountability and justice while avoiding harm, surveillance, or extractive research practices? • What roles can communities, survivors, advocates, and institutions each play in building ethical, community-rooted data ecosystems? • What does “community ownership of data” look like in practice? Cross-cutting theme: Across all breakout rooms, participants will also address how to protect data from being weaponised or misused. This includes discussions on strength-based and positive framing - approaches that emphasise resilience, agency, and community solutions - safeguarding sensitive information, and ensuring that data practices uphold the dignity, safety, and sovereignty of Indigenous communities.
10:55-11:00	Break

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11:00 - 12:00	Session 3: Intergenerational Trauma, Impunity, and the Need for Systemic Prevention and Response Mechanisms [Breakout sessions] Objectives: • Recognise how intergenerational trauma is rooted in colonial violence and state marginalisation. • Situate impunity within the context of state and systemic failure, not an indictment of communities. • Recognition of plural justice systems that allow for the accountability of perpetrators and the protection and care of survivors through Indigenous justice mechanisms • Reflect on the importance of historical contexts for bridging perspectives and developing effective strategies. • Identify entry points to strengthen prevention and response systems. • Present culturally safe early warning systems, risk mitigation, and survivor-centred case management models. • Sharing best practices: Examples of effective community-led prevention and response strategies. Breakout Discussions: Group 1 - Intergenerational Trauma: Focus on how the legacy of colonial violence and state marginalisation continues to shape community experiences and individual lives. Discussions will explore how intergenerational trauma contributes to the over-representation of Indigenous women and girls as victims, and Indigenous men as perpetrators — within a broader context of structural neglect, racism, and exclusion. Participants will consider the psychological, cultural, and relational dimensions of trauma across generations, and reflect on approaches to healing grounded in Indigenous knowledge, cultural continuity, and community-led practices. Guiding Questions: • How does intergenerational trauma, rooted in colonial violence, dispossession, and state marginalisation, continue to shape the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, families, and communities today? • In what ways does this trauma contribute to the over-representation of Indigenous women and girls as victims, and Indigenous men as perpetrators, within broader contexts of structural neglect, racism, and exclusion? • How are trauma and violence transmitted across generations at psychological, cultural, and relational levels? • What Indigenous-led, culturally grounded approaches to healing and prevention have proven effective in addressing intergenerational trauma? • How can prevention and response strategies acknowledge trauma without reinforcing harmful stereotypes or harmful narratives? Group 2 - Impunity, State, and Systemic Failures Examine the legal, political, and institutional structures that enable impunity in cases of femicide and violence against Indigenous women and girls. Reflect on the pathologisation of Indigenous men, situating it within the broader context of state violence, systemic racism, and structural neglect. Discuss how colonial histories continue to shape community relationships with state authorities, impacting trust, engagement, and access to justice. Participants will consider which accountability mechanisms could be strengthened or reimagined to address these systemic failures.

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	Guiding Questions: • What forms of impunity most commonly affect cases of femicide and violence against Indigenous women and girls (e.g. failures in investigation, prosecution, protection, or data)? • How do colonial legacies, systemic racism, and institutional neglect shape relationships between Indigenous communities and state authorities, including levels of trust and engagement? • How can the pathologisation of Indigenous men be challenged while still ensuring accountability for violence? • What role can plural justice systems, including Indigenous justice mechanisms, play in addressing impunity while protecting survivors and communities? • Which legal, policy, or institutional accountability mechanisms could be strengthened or reimagined to better respond to violence against Indigenous women and girls? Group 3 - Strengthening Prevention, Early Warning, and Response Systems Explore community-led strategies for preventing violence, identifying risk, and responding to cases in culturally safe and effective ways. Participants will discuss how early warning systems, survivor-centred case management, and other tools grounded in Indigenous realities can be developed, adapted, and scaled. Guiding Questions: • What community-led prevention strategies have been effective in identifying and addressing risks of violence against Indigenous women and girls at early stages? • How can early warning systems be designed in culturally safe ways that reflect Indigenous realities and avoid harm? • What does survivor-centred, culturally grounded case management look like in Indigenous contexts? • How can prevention and response mechanisms balance confidentiality, safety, and community accountability? • What conditions are needed to sustain, adapt, or scale effective Indigenous-led prevention and response models?
12:00 - 12:30	Regional Reflection: Input to Global Session [Plenary session] A facilitated discussion to identify key messages, priorities, and insights from the regions to help shape the agenda and focus of the merged global session. Output: Consensus on the definition and conceptualisation of femicide or a departure from a consensus with regional nuances.



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