



# INTIMATE FEMICIDE

(AND LIVING WITH THREATS IN THE HOME)

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# GUN CONTROL



## DEFINITIONS

### What is femicide

Femicide is generally understood to involve the intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls.

Source: WHO

The feminist movement in the 1970s founded the term 'femicide' to specifically refer to the killing of women because they are women. This definition brought attention to the number of women's deaths caused by gender-based issues and misogyny (or hatred of/or prejudice against women and girls).

Since the beginning, the idea of femicide was meant to include different kinds of violent acts. For example:

- dowry and 'honour' killings
- intimate partner violence
- murder with rape
- the killing of sex workers
- female infanticide or selective abortion (when female infants/fetuses are killed because they are female)
- and other deaths that occur when women or girls are targeted because of their sex

This definition has expanded over time. Today it is sometimes understood as a broader understanding of violence against women (such as any killing of a woman).

Source: Article extract - International perspective and data:  
Geneva Declaration

### What is 'intimate femicide'?

Intimate femicide refers to the killing of a woman by the woman's husband, boyfriend (dating or cohabiting), ex-husband (divorced or separated), ex-boyfriend, same-sex partner or a rejected would-be lover. This is also known as intimate partner homicide.

Source: Gender Links

The broad category of intimate partners includes all sexual partners — such as current and former spouses or partners — as well as other close family members if they were involved in an intimate relationship with the victim. Non-intimate partners include friends and acquaintances, as well as known strangers and family members.

Source: International perspective and data: Geneva Declaration

Intimate femicide-suicide is the killing of a woman by her intimate partner followed by the suicide of the perpetrator within a week of the homicide.

Source: Article extract - GFSA

## Remember

**South Africa's Domestic Violence Act of 1998 (DVA) recognises that domestic violence includes intimate partner violence (IPV).**

SOURCE: ARTICLE EXTRACT: GFSA FIREARMS CONTROL BRIEFING

## TO GET YOU THINKING

Cape Town - Relatives of a Mitchells Plain woman and her mother, who were shot dead allegedly by her cop boyfriend, say he went berserk because she wanted to leave him. The Daily Voice can also reveal that the officer, who killed himself after the double murder, lied to his girlfriend and colleagues about being divorced from his wife.

Meanwhile, the relatives blame Mitchells Plain cops for the bloodbath, saying they “killed” Charmaine Goliath, 27, and her mother, Susan April, 54, when they failed to arrest Detective Sergeant Granville Brooks after he threatened them in front of police on Wednesday night.

Instead, Brooks’ colleagues “talked him down” and let him go. He returned to Charmaine’s Begonia Street home in Lenteguur on Thursday morning where he allegedly shot her and her sickly mother before turning his service pistol on himself.

A shocked colleague says: “The team that was there didn’t expect that from him, they had calmed him down.” But Charmaine’s brother-in-law, who only identified himself as Kurt, told the Daily Voice: “This should never have happened if police did their job on Wednesday evening.” Family members and police sources reveal Charmaine’s sister had called police to their house on Wednesday night after Brooks became “violent and argumentative.”

A police source close to the investigation says Brooks, 41, who was stationed at Lenteguur Police Station, and had a “sterling record”, had threatened to “come back and kill everyone” as his colleagues escorted him out of the house. “All I know is that there was a domestic violence dispute and that there were vans called to the house,” the source says.

“The sister called the detective commander who called the shift commander.” He said ‘as ek terug kom, gaan ek almal vrek maak’ (He said, when I come back, I will kill all of you),” the source says.

Brooks had just returned from training in Oudtshoorn and had apparently lied to his girlfriend of two years about his divorce. Neighbours in Begonia Street told cops Brooks arrived early on Thursday morning and greeted them; later they heard four or five gunshots ring out. Cops with snipers arrived on the scene, suspecting they were dealing with a hostage situation. When cops later rushed into the house, they discovered all three had been shot dead in the bedrooms. Charmaine’s father was not at home, as he had gone to draw his pension. It is believed Brooks had sent out a child, who had apparently also been at the house, to buy a chiproll.

Friends reveal Charmaine wanted to leave Brooks, “but that he didn’t take the break-up well and snapped.” “She wanted to leave him because she found out he was still married and that he was seeing his wife. But it seems she was also cheating on him and he went berserk,” a close friend says. Meanwhile, Brooks’ colleagues, friends and senior officers at his workplace say they were shocked to learn he was still married.

A close friend and colleague of Brooks’ says: “We always believed he was divorced because he claimed that he was no longer married. We heard at the debriefing on Thursday night that he never divorced, but he always said he was.”

His wife, Samantha Brooks, with whom he has two children, took to Facebook, confirming they were married, posting: “I will always love you, my husband.”

Source: IOL News

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How would the outcome of this crime have changed if the perpetrator was not a member of the SAPS? I.e. how did his status as a police officer affect how the domestic violence complaint was treated by police?

What were some of the tell-tale signs that this perpetrator intended to cause physical harm to his girlfriend and her family?

What was the role of gender and power in this incident?

The perpetrator was said to have a “clean record”. What do you think this means, especially in relation to having a history of violence or engaging in problem drinking (where alcohol is used dangerously in a way that can negatively impact someone’s health and life)?

## GUNS IN FEMICIDE/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

- While women make up just 10% of gun homicide victims in South Africa, guns play a significant role in violence against women: they are used to kill, rape, threaten and intimidate.
- A summary of research into IPV in South Africa shows that:
  - Women are most vulnerable to being shot by an intimate partner in the home: 60% of gunshot homicides in 1999 occurred at home and 31% of women were shot and killed by an intimate partner.
  - Legal gun ownership significantly increases the risk of intimate femicide-suicide with two-thirds (66%) of intimate femicide-suicide perpetrators in 1999 owning a legal gun.
  - The high percentage of guns used in intimate femicide-suicide is attributed to the lethality of guns and the ease with which they can be used, with international research showing that guns are up to 12 times more likely to result in death than non-firearm assaults in IPV.
- In South Africa, 83% of victims that were shot were killed and of the women victims of gun homicide, 68% were killed with a single shot, most often to the head and face.
- A significant proportion of intimate partner suicide perpetrators are employed in the police, army or private security industry, showing that easy access to guns increases the risk for intimate partner-suicide.
- Guns are often used in rape – 41% of rapes reported by adult women to the police in Gauteng Province in 2003 involved a firearm.

### Remember



**Research in the USA shows that the four main types of threatening gun-related behaviour used by men in IPV is threatening to shoot their partner; cleaning, holding, or loading a gun during an argument; threatening to shoot a person or pet the partner cared about; and shooting a gun during an argument with their partner.**

SOURCE: GFSA

## DID YOU KNOW?

**GLOBALLY, APPROXIMATELY 66,000 WOMEN ARE KILLED ANNUALLY.**



Source: Article extract - International perspective and data: Geneva Declaration and Shaw chapter

**The South African Police Service (SAPS) does not have a domestic violence crime category. The extent and nature of IPV crime needs to be determined from a range of other crimes, including assault, pointing a firearm, intimidation, rape or attempted murder. IPV is significantly under-reported, which further complicates our knowledge of how many women experience IPV.**

Source: Article extract: GFSA Firearms Control Briefing

## MYTHBUSTERS

### MYTH

**Illegal guns increase the chances of domestic violence between intimate partners.**

**If your intimate partner threatens to kill you or your family with a weapon, don't take them seriously, they're probably bluffing.**

**Walking away from an abusive partner without seeking support makes you safer, because you are no longer in a relationship, they can't harm you.**

**Masculinity has nothing to do with combating intimate femicide in South Africa.**

### FACT

In fact, legal gun ownership increases the risk of intimate femicide-suicide with two-thirds (66%) of intimate femicide-suicide perpetrators in SA in 1999 owning a legal gun.

Source: WHO

Threatening to shoot is one of the main types of abusive behaviour used by men in interpersonal violence.

Source: GFSA

Leaving an abusive relationship is actually a high risk factor for becoming a victim of intimate femicide. Seek support from those you trust or protection from the police if you feel unsafe after a break up.

Source: WHO

Attitudes and behaviours surrounding gender are underlying factors in intimate partner violence and need to be addressed and heard and considered when laws to control guns are crafted.

Source: Article extract: International perspective and data, Shaw.

## Remember

**Reduce gun ownership and strengthen gun laws! Studies consistently show an association between ownership of guns, particularly handguns, and perpetration of intimate femicide. Research from the USA has found an association between women getting a gun for their own protection and an increased risk of intimate femicide at the hands of a partner. Women were found to be three times more likely to be murdered if there was a gun in their home. WHO recommends that gun ownership be restricted. More specifically however, research has found that stronger gun laws for men previously cited for or convicted of intimate partner abuse are of particular importance in reducing rates of femicide.**

SOURCE: WHO

## PREVENTION RATHER THAN CURE

- Did you know 32% of women killed in South Africa in 1999 died from gunshot injuries. This reduced to 17% in 2009. Researchers determined that this could only be due to the introduction of the Firearms Control Act in 2000 because deaths by other means, including stab and blunt injuries, remained stable.
- International research shows that it is more effective to restrict gun access to people with a history of abuse, than to remove a gun from a home after domestic violence has been reported. South Africa's Firearms Control Act has two mechanisms to help make sure that gun owners are and remain "fit and proper" to own a gun.
- **Mechanism 1:** Two-tier licensing: The FCA's two-tier licensing system aims to confirm that only "fit and proper" people are granted firearm licences.

Tier 1: Competency certificate: Like a learner's licence to drive, anyone applying for a firearm competency certificate as a first step for a firearm licence must meet certain requirements.

In order to determine whether an applicant is at risk s/ he is required to complete a self-reporting questionnaire, which includes asking if the applicant has:

- In the past five years been diagnosed or treated by a medical practitioner for depression, drug, intoxicating or narcotic substance abuse, behavioural problems or emotional problems; or
- In the past two years experienced a

divorce or separation from an intimate partner with whom the applicant resided and where there were written allegations of violence.

- In addition, police officers are required to undertake three interviews with individuals known to the applicant, including the applicant's spouse.

Tier 2: Firearm licence: A firearm licence documents the state's recognition that the person has been judged "fit and proper" to own a firearm.

- **Mechanism 2:** Regular licence renewal: Once a gun licence has been issued, the FCA requires firearm licence holders to regularly renew their licences; renewals can take place every 2, 5 and 10 years.

Imposing a limited duration on a gun licence provides:

- Confirmation that the licensed owner is still qualified to have a firearm, placing responsibility on the licence holder to maintain "fit and proper" behaviour; and
- Establishing genuine need for the continued ownership of a firearm.

Source: Article extract: GFSA Firearms Control Briefi

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT INTIMATE FEMICIDE

These questions can help guide your radio shows and outreach.

They are angles to the bigger topic of intimate femicide.

You have many examples of how to develop your outreaches and radio shows from previous guides. Use them to expand on some of the angles below.



**Intimate femicide, gender and power.**



**The power that the Firearms Control Act has to regulate legal gun ownership to prevent IPV crimes made by police, officers and military (all of whom have access to guns).**



**How a culture that tolerates violence against women creates the foundation for IPV.**

**“South Africa’s Domestic Violence Act (1998) and Firearms Control Act (2000) allow the courts and/or the police to remove a firearm from a gun owner who misuses it.”**

SOURCE: ARTICLE EXTRACT: GFSA - “REMOVING GUNS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”

**“Many victims of femicide had previously reported being threatened with a firearm (Campbell, Webster, and Glass, 2009).”**

SOURCE: ARTICLE EXTRACT: GFSA FIREARMS CONTROL BRIEFING

