

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
FEMICIDE IN POLAND  
FOUNDATION REGARDING THE  
PREVENTION OF FATAL VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN IN POLAND**



**FEMICIDE**  
IN POLAND



## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FEMICIDE IN POLAND FOUNDATION REGARDING THE PREVENTION OF FATAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLAND**

Violence against women can take many forms. As a think tank specializing in the analysis of high-risk violence cases, we have developed a series of recommendations addressed to judicial authorities, the Ministry of Justice, and the Government Plenipotentiary for Equality at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

Reports by the Femicide in Poland Foundation have shown that:

- The majority of femicides in Poland and across Europe are relational in nature (intimate-partner femicides) — 94% of victims knew their perpetrators, most often being killed by current or former partners or family members.
- More than 80% of the analyzed femicide cases were preceded by prior violence, threats, stalking, coercive control, or other forms of escalating violence against women.
- In a significant number of cases, state authorities had prior knowledge of the violence, yet the lack of proper risk assessment failed to result in effective protection for victims.
- In nearly every fifth femicide case in Poland, a child was a direct witness to the killing. Perpetrators increasingly use proxy violence, threatening to kill or abduct children in order to inflict even greater pain on their mothers.
- The most dangerous moment for women is separation or attempting to leave the perpetrator, as confirmed by both international data and the analysis of Polish femicide cases.
- Many women repeatedly reported violence before their deaths, yet institutional responses remained fragmented and uncoordinated.
- The lack of a unified data collection system leads to underestimating the scale of femicide in Poland and hinders the development of effective anti-violence policies.
- The media report *Femicide in Polish Media 2016–2026* demonstrated that Polish media too often uses language that contributes to trivializing and neutralizing violence against women. Our analysis identified six harmful narratives present in Polish media coverage: macabritization (including animalization), romanticization, sensationalism, stereotyping and stigmatization, trivialization, and humorization.



- Media coverage frequently resulted in secondary victimization of women through questioning victims' credibility, exposing their private lives, or excusing perpetrators by referring to emotions, alcohol, or mental health crises.
- Headlines, metaphors, the selection of details, and the portrayal of both perpetrators and victims shape how audiences understand violence, assign responsibility, and perceive its structural and gender-based nature. The report found that some press and media narratives, instead of informing, transform crimes into spectacles of emotion, horror, or “tragic love stories.” The central thesis of the report is that language can cause secondary harm. In this context, harmful narratives constitute a form of symbolic violence because they reinforce domination, stereotypes, and weaken public sensitivity to violence against women through seemingly “natural” storytelling.
- Many media publications omitted the context of prior violence against women, portraying femicide as a “sudden incident” rather than the result of long-term escalation of abuse.
- The most dangerous narratives that must be challenged are those that dehumanize victims, focus excessively on graphic details of death, or use animalizing portrayals of perpetrators or victims. Dehumanizing language is especially dangerous as it is the first step toward normalizing violence in public discourse.
- The reports highlight the necessity of implementing a continuous model of state coordination of anti-violence measures based on risk analysis, data sharing, and monitoring of perpetrators of violence against women.



## **What is needed to effectively prevent fatal violence against women in Poland?**

### **1. LEGAL RECOGNITION OF FEMICIDE AND NATIONAL GUIDELINES**

Legal recognition of femicide as the killing of a woman because of her gender and acknowledging femicide as a specific form of violence against women in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention CETS210. In the absence of a separate legal classification of femicide, it is necessary to develop guidelines for police, prosecutors, and courts based on UN standards and recommendations regarding the identification of femicide, enabling authorities to recognize situations in which violence against women may escalate into femicide and distinguish femicide from homicide unrelated to the victim's gender.

### **2. UNIFIED TERMINOLOGY**

Introducing a unified definition of violence against women encompassing physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and digital violence, stalking, coercive control, and post-separation violence. It is also necessary to standardize terminology and classifications used by police, prosecutors, courts, and local anti-violence programs, as institutions currently use inconsistent terminology, creating confusion and obscuring the problem.

### **3. FEMICIDE DATA GAP**

Creating a coherent, centralized national database on violence against women and femicide accessible to all relevant state institutions, modeled after the Polish Femicide Map maintained by our Foundation. The system should be based on the principles of data feminism and the “Research, Register, Remember” approach. It should enable not only data collection and risk analysis, but also documentation of the history of violence against women. Cooperation with the femtech sector and businesses is necessary to build modern digital infrastructure for the justice system and eliminate the femicide data gap.

### **4. VIOGÉN**

Implementing an interinstitutional information-sharing system modeled on the Spanish VioGén system, enabling ongoing monitoring of perpetrators, risk assessment, and coordination of protective actions.

### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

Introducing unified tools for assessing the risk of escalation of violence used by police, prosecutors, courts, and social services. Mandatory inclusion of high-risk factors such as prior threats, stalking, coercive control, victim isolation, access to weapons, sexual violence, and separation or relationship breakdown.



## **6. MONITORING AND POST-CASE ANALYSIS**

Continuous monitoring of femicide and suicide-femicide cases involving women in the context of violence, including analysis of prior reports of abuse, institutional responses, and legal proceedings. It is also necessary to establish an interdisciplinary fatal case review team modeled on the British MARAC and Domestic Homicide Review systems to identify systemic failures, evaluate institutional responses, and develop recommendations preventing future femicides.

## **7. ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE**

Recognizing that many killings of women were preceded by prior violence and that state institutions failed to properly assess the risk of escalation, preventing effective protection of victims.

## **8. GENDER-BASED MOTIVE**

Mandatory examination of gender-based motives in every killing of a woman. Not every killing of a woman constitutes femicide. Examining gender-related motives is essential for proper legal qualification of these crimes.

## **9. STRONG INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION**

Strengthening cooperation between police, prosecutors, courts, healthcare institutions, and social services to ensure rapid and effective information-sharing regarding threats.

## **10. TRAINING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Systemic training for law enforcement officers and justice sector professionals on violence against women, coercive control, psychotraumatology, and femicide risk assessment, taking into account the latest international criminological research.

## **11. MEDIA REPORTING STANDARDS**

We recommend introducing media standards for reporting on violence against women, including femicide cases. The language used in public discourse matters. Language shapes reality and influences how Polish society — including justice system representatives — perceives violence against women.

## **12. VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH**

Implementing a victim/survivor-centred approach rooted in feminist victimology, focused on ensuring safety, dignity, and preventing secondary victimization of women who have experienced violence or trauma. It is also necessary to include the perspective of children witnessing violence against their mothers or other close women.



### **13. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS BUILDING**

Public knowledge and awareness regarding femicide and gender-based violence against women in Poland remain very low. In line with the Council of Europe Convention, educational initiatives are necessary to reach society through responsible communication and storytelling, including meetings, discussions, cultural projects, and the involvement of academia and culture.

### **14. INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

Recognizing the intersectional nature of violence against women, particularly the experiences of women belonging to national, religious, ethnic, and migrant minorities, including Ukrainian, Belarusian, Roma, and Latin American women. The anti-violence system should address additional barriers experienced by non-Polish-speaking women, such as limited access to support, lack of translation services, economic or residency dependence, and increased risk of institutional exclusion. It is also necessary to include the perspectives of people experiencing violence in non-heteronormative relationships.

### **15. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2026–2030**

It is necessary to develop a comprehensive national strategy for preventing violence against women and femicide in Poland for the years 2026–2030, including preventive, protective, educational, legislative, and monitoring measures. The strategy should be modeled on solutions implemented in Spain and the United Kingdom and based on interinstitutional cooperation, risk analysis, and standards for protecting the rights of women and girls experiencing violence.

## **Appendix 1**

The VioGén system is a Spanish state system for monitoring gender-based violence cases, established by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior in 2007. Its purpose is to protect women experiencing violence through case registration, risk assessment, selection of protection measures, and coordination of police and institutional responses.

### **Recommendation for Poland**



We recommend initiating work on a Polish system for monitoring violence against women and femicide risk modeled on the Spanish VioGén system. The system should function as a centralized, secure database accessible to police, prosecutors, courts, social services, healthcare institutions, and specialized support organizations.

### **Where to start**

1. **Data diagnosis** — determine what information on violence against women is currently collected by police, prosecutors, courts, social services, and healthcare institutions, and identify existing gaps.
2. **Unified terminology** — adopt common definitions of violence against women, gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, coercive control, post-separation violence, and femicide.
3. **Pilot implementation** — launch pilot programs in selected regions, particularly where domestic violence and femicide rates are high.
4. **Risk assessment tool** — develop a unified risk assessment form for identifying the risk of escalation to severe bodily harm or death, including mandatory consideration of threats, stalking, separation, access to weapons, sexual violence, and prior reports.
5. **Institutional integration** — ensure information exchange between institutions so that prior reports, court decisions, restraining orders, police interventions, and social services information do not remain isolated in separate systems. Women’s lives and the lives of their loved ones cannot depend on whether someone answers a phone call or replies to an email.
6. **Victim protection** — link risk levels to concrete protective measures, such as urgent victim contact, restraining orders, perpetrator isolation, perpetrator monitoring, safety planning, and psychological support.
7. **Post-case analysis** — establish a permanent interinstitutional team analyzing femicide and attempted femicide cases in order to identify systemic failures and develop recommendations preventing future fatalities.
8. **Algorithm and human rights oversight** — if the system uses automated risk assessment elements, it must be subject to audits, expert oversight, and the principle that technology supports — but never replaces — human decision-making.



### **Purpose of implementation**

The goal of the Polish model should not merely be “counting cases,” but creating an early-warning system for femicide. VioGén demonstrates that effective protection requires a shared database, unified risk assessment, rapid information exchange, and clearly assigned institutional responsibility. Implementing such a solution in Poland should become one of the pillars of the national strategy for preventing violence against women for 2026–2030.

Spain is currently implementing VioGén 2, the second generation of the system, developed since 2026. This demonstrates that the Spanish state is not abandoning the VioGén model but continuously improving and expanding it. The new version aims to increase the effectiveness of risk assessment, improve interoperability between institutions, and identify high-risk femicide cases even more quickly. This shows that an integrated model for monitoring violence against women has become a permanent element of state security policy.

