



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Is Northern Ireland the most dangerous place in Europe to be a woman?

Statistical note on PSNI female homicide statistics in Northern Ireland


Date of Publication:

9th June 2026

Issued by:

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Over the last number of years variations of the phrase “Northern Ireland is the most dangerous place in Europe to be a woman” have been used in both media and public discourse, primarily in the context of female homicide. This paper was prepared as a briefing note for a meeting of the Northern Ireland Policing Board in December 2025 following a request for the Chief Constable to set out how this phrase originated and to provide a comparison of rates of female homicide in Northern Ireland with other countries. It supplements the currently published [statistical note](#) which clarified and corrected data on intimate partner homicide incorrectly published by Eurostat by providing additional context around female homicide in Northern Ireland using figures published by the United Nations.

Statistics Branch

PSNI

June 2026

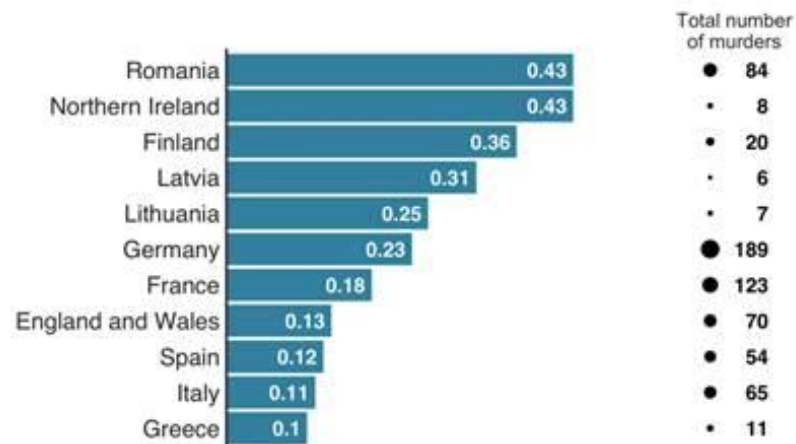
Is Northern Ireland the most dangerous place in Europe to be a woman?

In 2019 the BBC published an article using Eurostat figures (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-49586759>) highlighting the number of homicides committed during 2017 by intimate partners across various European countries. The article placed Romania and Northern Ireland as the highest ranked countries for homicides (both male and female victims) by intimate partners, with a rank of 0.43 per 100,000 population, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Chart from BBC Article published in 2019

Murders in Europe committed by a partner

Rate per 100,000 inhabitants in selected countries, 2017



Source: Eurostat



This statement was incorrect for a number of reasons. Eurostat quoted that there were 8 murders by an intimate partner in 2017, where the correct figure was 4 (3 female and 1 male). Therefore the rate used by the BBC should have been 0.21 per 100,000 instead of 0.43 and Northern Ireland should have been presented between Germany (0.23) and France (0.18). Moreover, it was based on a single data point – the rate for 2017. Homicide is a low volume crime, and can vary significantly year to year. A single data point may not be reflective of the broader trend.

Female Homicide Statistics in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2024/25

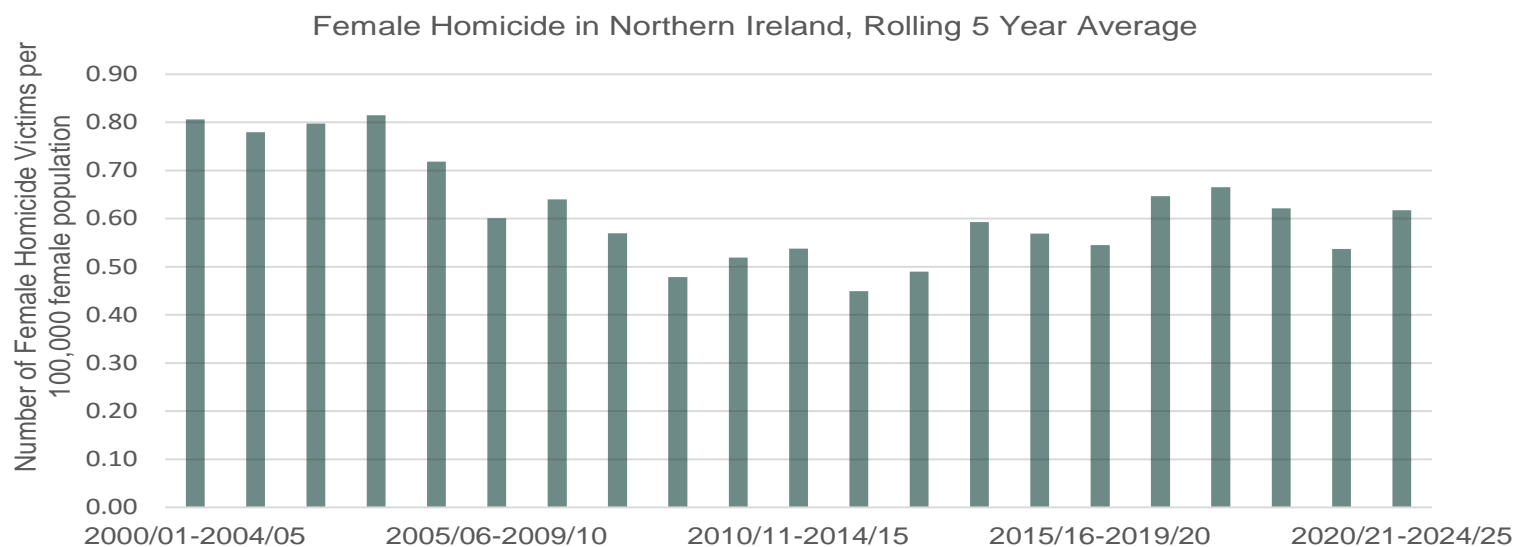
Table 1 presents both the number and rate of all female homicides per year over the 10 years to 2024/25. During this time period the number of female homicides has varied from a low of 2 in 2023/24, to a high of 9 in 2017/18 – 450% greater than the lowest level.

Table 1 Female homicide in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2024/25, number and rate per 100,000 female population

Female Homicides	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number	3	4	9	6	4	8	5	7	2	8
Rate (per 100,000 population)	0.32	0.42	0.94	0.63	0.41	0.83	0.52	0.72	0.21	0.82

To account for this variance, it is useful to smooth out the rates by taking an average over a number of years. The following chart shows a 5 year rolling average of female homicide over the 25 years 2000/01 to 2024/25.

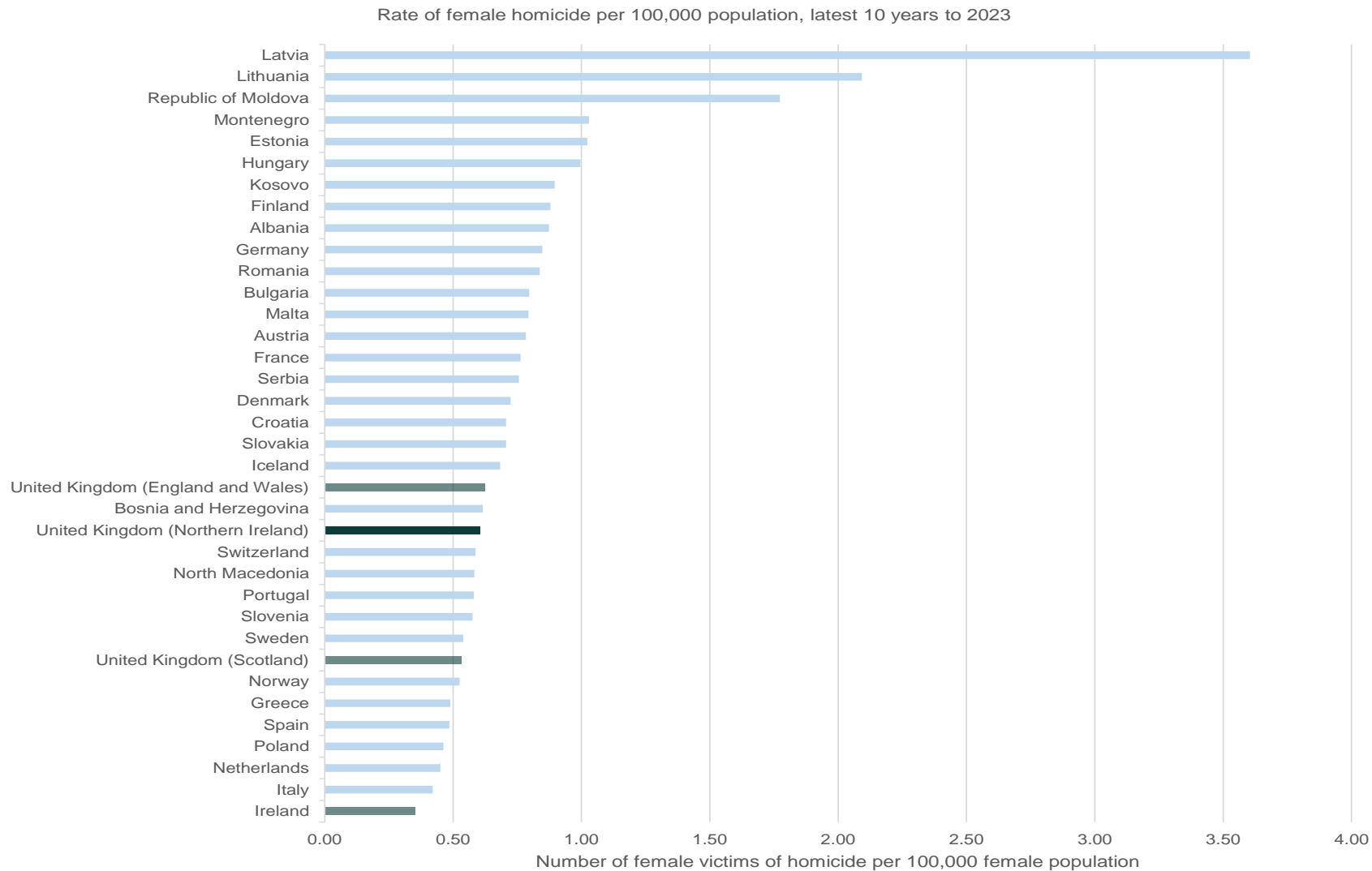
Figure 2 Female homicide in Northern Ireland, rolling 5 year average 2000/01 to 2024/25



When taking this approach, it is easier to see that the rate has been fairly consistent over the last 25 years. It was higher in the early part of the period but has remained consistently around 0.6 per 100,000 female victims since the mid-2010s.

Ignoring some of the outliers from Eastern and Northern Europe, Northern Ireland sits roughly in the middle of these countries. The rate in Northern Ireland (0.61 per 100,000) is slightly lower than England Wales (0.63 per 100,000, based on the average of the 8 years 2014 to 2021) and slightly higher than Scotland (0.54 per 100,000). The rate in Ireland, 0.35 per 100,000, is the lowest in this comparison.

Figure 3 Average Female Homicide Rates across European Nations over the Ten Years 2014 to 2023



Femicide/domestic abuse homicide with a female victim: The United Nations publishes estimates for female homicide by an intimate partner or other family member, which they describe as ‘Femicide’. This is the equivalent to the PSNI’s definition for female domestic homicide. The estimates for Europe over the latest available five years range from 0.5 per 100,000 of the female population to 0.7 per 100,000 (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/publications>, filter on Topic Femicide/femicide). In Northern Ireland the average rate for female homicide by intimate partner or other family member over the five years 2020/21 to 2024/25 is 0.5 per 100,000 of the female population (<https://www.psnipolice.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics>, Annual Trends Table 3.9A & B).

Table 2 Rate of Female Homicide per 100,000 female in Europe, 2012 – 2023

European Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average for most recent 10 years
Latvia	3.35	2.20	3.39	2.75	3.21	4.00	4.13	4.07	4.11	3.55	3.96	2.87	3.60
Lithuania	3.29	3.76	3.35	3.13	2.97	1.71	1.13	1.47	1.95	1.49	1.95	1.79	2.09
Republic of Moldova	3.38	3.78	0.95	2.67	2.76	2.10	2.42	1.79	1.57	0.74	1.46	1.27	1.77
Montenegro	0.91	0.30	1.22	0.92	0.93	1.24	0.63	1.58	0.95	0.64	1.88	0.30	1.03
Estonia	2.41	2.56	1.29	1.53	1.29	1.15	0.72	0.86	1.43	0.57	0.56	0.84	1.02
Hungary	1.12	1.37	1.30	1.98	1.60	0.86	0.84	0.61	0.77	0.51	0.87	0.62	1.00
Kosovo	1.20	0.43	1.30	1.11	0.89	1.45	1.00	0.34	0.90	0.34	-	-	0.90
Finland	1.49	0.87	0.97	0.57	0.79	1.07	0.89	1.00	0.82	0.96	0.89	0.81	0.88
Albania	1.77	1.36	0.82	1.09	1.16	0.89	1.03	0.89	0.62	0.83	0.56	0.84	0.87
Germany	0.72	0.79	0.82	0.78	1.12	0.90	0.87	0.65	0.84	0.80	0.82	0.87	0.85
Romania	0.80	0.56	1.04	0.93	0.89	0.88	0.81	0.71	0.96	0.77	0.86	0.54	0.84
Bulgaria	0.98	0.91	0.70	0.79	0.60	0.96	1.05	0.64	0.73	0.79	0.82	0.88	0.80
Malta	1.40	0.00	0.46	0.90	0.88	0.43	1.68	1.22	0.40	0.00	1.18	0.78	0.79
Austria	0.88	0.67	0.50	0.39	0.70	0.83	0.98	0.89	0.82	0.88	0.89	0.97	0.78
France	-	-	-	1.14	0.84	0.76	0.66	0.77	0.57	0.67	0.69	0.76	0.76
Serbia	1.02	1.23	0.98	0.80	1.02	0.67	0.76	0.77	0.61	0.75	0.56	0.65	0.76
Denmark	0.57	0.46	1.09	0.82	0.80	0.69	0.69	0.82	0.51	0.48	0.78	0.57	0.72
Croatia	0.81	0.95	0.78	0.69	0.93	0.85	0.38	0.68	0.93	0.69	0.69	0.45	0.71
Slovakia	0.65	0.83	0.68	0.50	0.72	0.68	0.93	0.54	1.00	0.65	0.61	0.74	0.71
Iceland	0.63	0.00	0.61	0.00	0.60	1.18	0.58	0.00	2.24	0.55	0.54	0.53	0.68
UK (England and Wales)	0.58	0.64	0.63	0.59	0.59	0.72	0.74	0.61	0.52	0.62	-	-	0.63
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.25	0.74	0.59	0.97	0.82	0.56	0.45	0.57	0.29	0.41	0.71	0.78	0.62
UK (Northern Ireland)	0.32	0.54	0.75	0.53	0.21	0.95	0.52	0.73	0.73	0.83	0.62	0.21	0.61
Switzerland	0.42	0.78	0.58	0.72	0.59	0.47	0.65	0.60	0.62	0.57	0.45	0.63	0.59
North Macedonia	1.07	0.68	0.98	0.20	0.60	0.40	0.92	0.51	0.62	0.32	0.32	0.96	0.58
Portugal	0.75	0.95	0.88	0.58	0.34	0.44	0.50	0.60	0.62	0.46	0.44	-	0.58
Slovenia	0.58	0.29	0.58	1.06	0.19	0.87	0.48	0.67	0.57	0.57	0.47	0.28	0.58
Sweden	0.44	0.54	0.52	0.59	0.59	0.54	0.65	0.49	0.49	0.46	0.44	0.63	0.54
UK (Scotland)	0.44	0.55	0.55	0.62	0.58	0.50	0.57	0.68	0.36	0.57	0.46	0.46	0.53
Norway	0.36	0.79	0.51	0.54	0.42	0.50	0.34	0.60	0.56	0.60	0.52	0.66	0.53
Greece	0.69	0.89	0.48	0.54	0.47	0.41	0.52	0.34	0.34	0.61	0.84	0.34	0.49
Spain	0.53	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.48	0.47	0.49	0.52	0.49	0.40	0.50	0.46	0.49
Poland	0.56	0.43	0.47	0.57	0.36	0.48	0.42	0.41	0.45	0.40	0.46	0.61	0.46
Netherlands	0.58	0.65	0.35	0.49	0.37	0.49	0.41	0.50	0.50	0.43	0.53	0.45	0.45
Italy	0.52	0.57	0.47	0.44	0.49	0.43	0.46	0.36	0.38	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.42
Ireland	0.52	0.39	0.47	0.29	0.08	0.62	0.41	0.28	0.24	0.28	0.43	0.42	0.35

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 'Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls' data series. Available on the UNODC website:

<https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-femicide>