

## RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON THE 20 JUNE 2024

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### DISCLAIMER

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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### COI QUERY RESPONSE

#### EL SALVADOR – INFORMATION ON FEMICIDE

The *European Union* in May 2024 states that: “As regards violence against women, the high number of femicides saw a steep reduction in official numbers from 113 femicides in 2019 to 63 in 2022 and 27 in 2023.”<sup>1</sup>

*Millennium Post Newspaper* in May 2024 mentioned that: “Today, Costa Rica has a lower rate of femicide compared with its neighbours, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico.”<sup>2</sup>

A report issued by *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)* in May 2024 notes that: “While cases of femicide have decreased, cases of other types of GBV remain high.”<sup>3</sup>

The *US Department of State* Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in April 2024 points out that: “ORMUSA, a domestic women's rights organization, registered 26 femicides between January and May 31, 42 percent of which were committed by the partner of the victim and 54 percent of which were committed in the home of the victim. On February 21, the Legislative Assembly unanimously voted to remove the statute of limitations for prosecuting femicide.”<sup>4</sup>

In April 2024 *CE Noticias Financieras* mentioned that: “At least 11 cases of femicide occurred in El Salvador between January and March 2024, according to information provided Tuesday to EFE by the

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<sup>1</sup> European Union (29 May 2024) EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World: 2023 Country Updates - El Salvador

<sup>2</sup> Millennium Post Newspaper (15 May 2024) End of impunity?

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (14 May 2024) El Salvador Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2023) [Summary; Part 1: Impact of the crisis and humanitarian conditions], p.3

<sup>4</sup> US Department of State (22 April 2024) 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: El Salvador, p.14

Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (Ormusa), which warns of "a trend of lack of protection" for women in the Central American country."<sup>5</sup>

This document further states that: "Among the deaths, said Silvia Juarez, program coordinator of the feminist organization Ormusa, is that of a human rights defender in the town of Sonsonate (east), whose remains were found seven days after she was reported missing, according to local press reports. Juarez said that "the trend in the year on the lack of protection and insecurity of women is maintained" and warned that "this shows that the lives of women are still highly unprotected and that the trend, despite the drop in homicides, the number of violent deaths of women and femicides continues with a red balance"."<sup>6</sup>

The document further points out that: "Representatives of a feminist consortium, made up of five non-governmental women's organizations and a community association, warned last March about the increase in murders of women perpetrated by their partners in El Salvador and lamented "the silence" of the authorities in the face of this situation. Some 38 femicides and violent deaths of women were registered in El Salvador between January and October 2023, according to data from Ormusa's Observatory of Violence Against Women."<sup>7</sup>

A report issued by *Freedom House* in February 2024 notes that: "Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and femicide, is also common. El Salvador has one of Latin America's highest femicide rates."<sup>8</sup>

In February 2024 *BBC News* reported that: "A man convicted of the femicide of a 16-year-old schoolgirl also has to show us his torso bearing the tattoos which are typical for gang members. One of the Salvadoran photographers who is part of our group later tells me that the girl was held captive and brutally murdered, her body dumped in a canal."<sup>9</sup>

The *US Congressional Research Service* in January 2024 points out that: "El Salvador, along with neighboring Honduras and Guatemala, has some of the world's highest levels of femicide (targeting women or girls for murder based on their gender) and violence against women. According to the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, El Salvador had the third-highest rate of femicide reported in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022. This violence has contributed to irregular emigration."<sup>10</sup>

In December 2023 *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)* reported that: "The Inter-American Commission observes some progress in the area of human rights in the country during 2023, particularly appreciating the adoption of various legislative and institutional strengthening measures to improve the protection and guarantee of women's rights. In this regard, it highlights reforms to criminal law to eliminate the statute of limitations for the exercise of criminal action in cases of femicide and aggravated femicide, reforms to labor law to guarantee the reinstatement of women

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<sup>5</sup> CE Noticias Financieras (17 April 2024) At least 11 femicides registered in El Salvador between January and March, according to NGO

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> ibid

<sup>8</sup> Freedom House (29 February 2024) Freedom in the World 2024: El Salvador, p.11

<sup>9</sup> BBC (15 February 2024) Coming face to face with inmates in El Salvador's mega-jail

<sup>10</sup> US Congressional Research Service (29 January 2024) El Salvador: Background and U.S. Relations (January 2024)

who have been dismissed due to pregnancy, and the creation of a specialized labor inspection unit for labor complaints. The Commission recognizes the reduction of murder rates in the country.”<sup>11</sup>

The same document states that: “Despite these efforts, the Commission notes with concern that the situation of gender-based violence against women, girls and adolescents persists in the country and has not ceased under the emergency regime. As of October 17, 2023, approximately 38 femicides and violent deaths of women were recorded. Given the increase in femicides at the beginning of the year, the government decided to increase police and military presence in the streets; however, the Commission notes that the armed forces have been repeatedly reported for sexual harassment and violence committed against women and girls, especially in the most vulnerable communities of the country.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) (31 December 2023) *Annual Report of the IACHR 2023: Chapter IV.A. Situation of Human Rights in the Region - El Salvador*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.5

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United Kingdom Home Office



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