

## Women implicated for homicide in 2016 and 2017

In 2016 and 2017, 321 women were implicated for homicide by the police and gendarmerie across France.

Young women feature particularly prominently among them, since under 36 year olds account for 57% of women implicated for homicide in 2016 and 2017. Similarly, the data analysis shows that the majority of homicides committed by these women take place in densely populated urban areas, including 30% in the urban unit of Paris.

Over this period, a small proportion female implicated are foreign (9 %) and a large proportion of them are unemployed (44 %).

The French Overseas regions have the highest rate of women implicated for homicide, per 1,000,000 female inhabitants.

### A word of caution

There is no legal definition of homicide in France, with French law instead distinguishing between unintentional and intentional injuries on another person's life. In this study, we chose to adopt the international definition of homicide as established by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2013. This defines homicide as the killing of a person by another person (*objective element*). This incident must be unlawful (*legal element*) and the perpetrator must have wilfully intended to kill or seriously injure the victim (*subjective element*). This definition includes murders, assassinations and manslaughter through intentional violence.

### 57% of women implicated for homicide are under 36 years old

The police and gendarmerie implicated [see [methodological overview](#)] 321 women for homicide in 2016 and 2017. There is a noticeably high proportion of young women among these suspects. Indeed, 183 of them are under 36 years old, i.e. 57% of the women implicated over these two years.

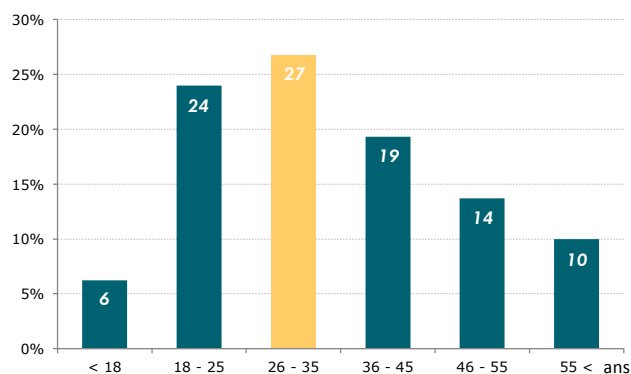
The largest proportion of implicated women is in the 26-35 y/o age group. With 86 women, this age group represents more than a quarter (27%) of women implicated for homicide over the past two years. The percentage of minor women implicated for homicide is 6%. 18-35 year olds account for 51% ( $n=163$ ) of all implicated women.

43% of suspected women are 36 years old or over ( $n=138$ ). It can be observed that the older the women, the fewer they are implicated for homicide. As shown in Graph 1, 36-45 year olds represent 19% ( $n=62$ ) of the total; 46-55 year olds 13.7% ( $n=44$ ); and the over 55s 10% ( $n=32$ ). This distribution of age among implicated women is consistent with the literature on the subject. As early as 1831, Quêtelet had already detected a link between age and crime: propensity to crime peaks at the onset of adulthood before gradually decreasing with age (Ouimet, 2015; Quêtelet, 1831). The age-crime curve (Farrington, 1986) also confirms that behavioural tendencies to commit a crime decrease with age.

(1) By comparison, 60% of women implicated for offences (excluding homicides) are under 36 years old. That being said, there is a significant difference regarding the percentage of minor women implicated: 15% of minor women implicated for offences (excluding homicides) versus 6% of girls implicated for homicide, i.e. 9-points difference.

By comparison, similar trends can be observed in the United States, where the average age of women convicted for homicide is 32 years old (Goeting, 1988). Although this average varies internationally - whilst it is fairly similar in Canada<sup>2</sup> (31 years old) it is higher in other countries, such as South Korea (38 years old) (Sea *et al.*, 2017) and Finland (37 years old) (Häkkinen-Nyholm *et al.*, 2009) - in all cases it remains below 40 years of age.

### 1 Distribution of women implicated for homicide in 2016 and 2017 by age group (%)



Scope: France.  
Source: SSMSI, Database of individuals implicated for crimes and offences 2016-2017 - processed by the ONDRP.

## A low percentage of foreign women

A very high proportion of women implicated in 2016 and 2017 are French nationals: 91% of the total ( $n=293$ ) versus just 9% of foreign nationals ( $n=28$ )<sup>3</sup>. This is relatively lower than the proportion of men suspected for homicide over this period: 85% of French nationals versus 15% foreign nationals.

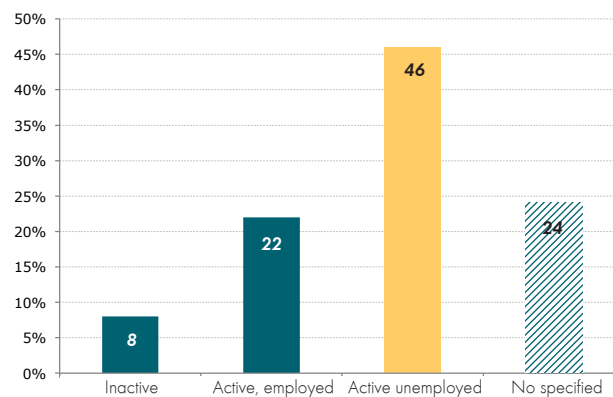
## 45% of implicated women for homicide are unemployed

Nearly half of women suspected for homicide (46%) are unemployed. Inactive women implicated who, according to the definition of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (Insee), are neither in employment nor unemployed<sup>4</sup>, only account for 8% of the total.

Lastly, 22% of women implicated for homicide are active and in employment ( $n=71$ ). That being said, it should be noted that the employment situation of 24% ( $n=76$ ) of women implicated has not been indicated.

The proportion of unemployed women convicted for homicide in South Korea and the United States is different from that observed in France. Accordingly, 30% of South-Korean women implicated for homicide are recorded as being unemployed (Sea *et al.*, 2017), while research conducted in the city of Detroit shows that 76.9% of women convicted of homicide are unemployed (Goeting, 1988).

### 1 Distribution of women implicated for homicide in 2016 and 2017 according to their employment situation (%)



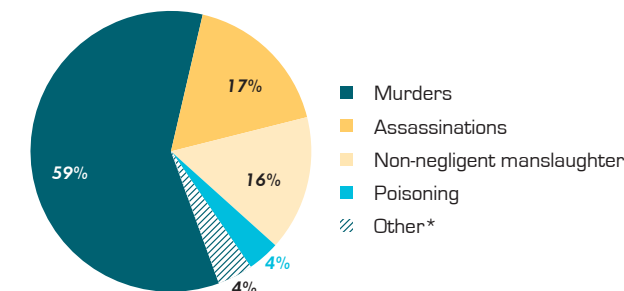
Scope: France.  
Source: SSMSI, Database of perpetrators of crimes and offences 2016-2017 - processed by the ONDRP.

## Nearly 60% of homicides committed are murders

The database forwarded by the French Ministerial Statistical Department for Internal Security (SSMSI), upon which this study draws, informs us about the different types of homicide committed for which women were implicated in 2016 and 2017 by the police and gendarmerie. Accordingly, 59% of these women were implicated for murder. The Criminal Code defines this offence as the act of intentionally causing another person's death and is punishable by a thirty-year prison sentence ([Art. 221-1 of the Criminal Code](#) - provision is made for a number of aggravating circumstances, however, extending the sentence in some cases to life imprisonment). The second type of homicide for which women are most commonly implicated is assassination (17%). Assassination is premeditated murder. It is punishable by life imprisonment ([Article 223-1 of the Criminal Code](#)).

It can also be observed that 16% of these women implicated for homicide were convicted on the grounds of manslaughter ([Article 222-7 of the Criminal Code](#), which provides for a 15-year prison sentence), and 4% on the grounds of poisoning ([Article 221-5 of the Criminal Code](#), which provides for the same sentences as for murder).

### 1 Distribution according to the type of homicide committed by women implicated in 2016 and 2017 (%)



Scope: France.  
Source: SSMSI, Database of perpetrators of crimes and offences 2016-2017 - processed by the ONDRP.  
\* The "other" category groups together several types of homicide, including score-settling between criminals, negligent manslaughter, and child (under 15 y/o) neglect resulting in death.

(2) Correctional Service Canada : <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/forum/e092/e092e-eng.shtml>.

(3) The proportion of foreign women implicated for other crimes and offences is similar to the percentage of foreign women implicated for homicide: 87%.

(4) See methodological overview.

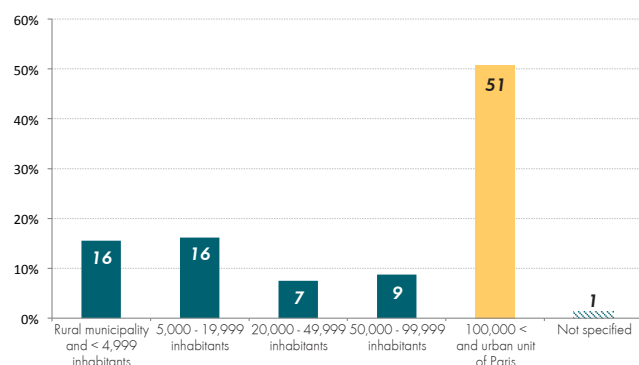
## Homicides primarily committed in densely populated urban areas

Densely populated urban areas concentrate the highest number of women implicated for homicide. Half of the homicides for which women were implicated (51%) were committed in urban areas of 100,000 inhabitants or more, and nearly a third of these (30%) were recorded in the urban unit of Paris. Urban units of 5,000 to 19,999 inhabitants represent the second sub-set (16%) within which the highest number of homicides committed by women has been recorded.

A similar number of homicides for which women have been implicated has been recorded in sparsely populated urban areas (with fewer than 4,999 inhabitants and rural municipalities). Furthermore, there are fewer female suspects in medium-sized urban units, with between 20,000 and 99,999 inhabitants (16%).

### 1 Distribution of women implicated in 2016 and 2017 by homicide location (%)

Scope: France.  
Source: SSMSI, Database of perpetrators of crimes and offences 2016-2017 - processed by the ONDRP.



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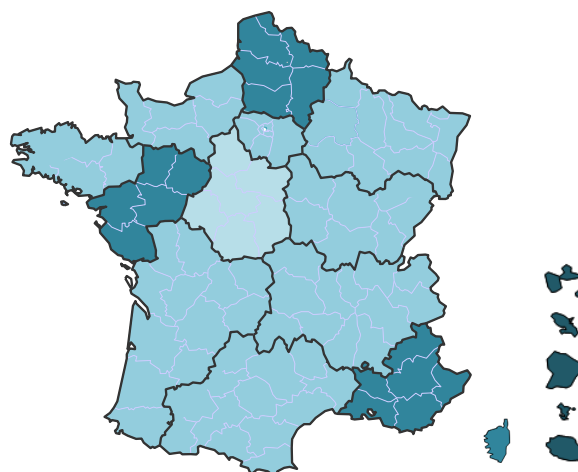
## French Overseas regions have the highest rate of women implicated for homicide per 1,000,000 female inhabitants

Most regions in France have a rate of women implicated for homicide lower than 6 per 1,000,000 female inhabitants. One region has a rate of women implicated for homicide lower than 3 (Centre-Val-de-Loire) and eight regions have a rate of between 3 and 5.9. The latter regions are spread across the whole territory. For instance, this category includes the Normandie (3.9),

the Nouvelle-Aquitaine (4.4), the Grand-Est (4.2) and the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (3.5).

It is interesting to note that a high number of implicated women over a given period in the same region does not necessarily lead to a high rate of implicated women. The Parisian region - with the highest female population (*total female population for 2016 and 2017 = 12,581,148<sup>5</sup>*) - has the highest number of women implicated for homicide. However, the rate of women implicated for homicide in this region is only the fifth highest (4.4) in France. By comparison, the Hauts-de-France, whose total female population over the same two years is twice as low (6,199,275) and which also presents a lower number of implicated women than Île-de-France, nevertheless has the second highest rate (6.5) of women implicated among all the regions.

Moreover, it can be noted that the French Overseas regions have the only rate higher than 10 (11.1), which is the highest rate of women implicated for homicide per 1,000,000 female inhabitants in France - and much higher than the Centre-Val-de-Loire region which has the lowest rate (2.3).



Rate of female suspects per 1 million women	Number of regions
< 3	1
3 - 5.9	8
6 - 9.9	3
>10	1*
	*: Overseas regions

Scope: France.  
Source: SSMSI, Database of perpetrators of crimes and offences 2016-2017 - processed by the ONDRP.

(5) Source: Insee - Population estimates (provisional results as at end 2017)

## Methodological overview

The “Implicated persons” databases for 2016 and 2017, forwarded by the SSMSI and upon which this Note draws, are populated with data extracted from the police or gendarmerie official reports, relating to natural persons who are suspected by law enforcement agencies to have been *implicated* for a crime or offence<sup>6</sup>. Data cover the whole country.

The *Direction centrale de la police judiciaire* (DCPJ) provides a precise definition of an *implicated person* as follows: “a person who has given a statement and against whom reliable and consistent evidence has been gathered in the proceedings referred to the public prosecutor to justify pressing charges – proving his or her participation in the commission of the offence”. It does not correspond to a status defined by the Code of Criminal Procedure, but to a situation which precedes any criminal justice decision, bearing on whether or not proceedings should be brought and, a fortiori, on the question of guilt. It is the judicial authorities who will determine at a later stage whether or not a person is the actual perpetrator of the offence (SSMSI, 2017; Langlade & Larchet, 2017).

Although the database groups together police procedures that were closed in 2016 and 2017 respectively, the acts may have

been committed earlier. Since the year the offence was committed does not systematically match up with the year a person is implicated, it is possible for someone to be implicated in 2017 for acts committed in 2012, for example.

The non-response rate for the variable concerning the occupation of female suspects is high (24%), and data obtained in this regard are subsequently less reliable. Nevertheless, we have been able to classify their occupation according to the classification used by the Insee for French socio-economic groups. Accordingly, “inactive persons” are officially defined as people who are not old or young enough to work or be unemployed, i.e. they neither unemployed nor in employment. This category includes people under 15 years old, students, retired people, and people who are unfit for work. “Employed active persons” are people over 15 years of age who have worked (even if this was only for one hour) during a reference week. The “unemployed” are the “unemployed, job-seeking population”.

It is also worth noting that the geographic distribution (rural areas/urban units and by region) shows the locations where the homicide was committed, rather than recorded.

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<sup>6</sup> Scope with respect to police and gendarmerie recorded crimes and offences in the Etat 4001 tool.