

JUSTICE MINISTER BACKS MIRROR CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE TERROR

EXCLUSIVE
BY LOUISE BURNE
Political Correspondent

JUSTICE Minister Helen McEntee has said people should be "screaming from the rooftops" about the number of women being killed in Ireland.

The Fine Gael minister was speaking exclusively to the Irish Mirror as part of our Stop the Violence campaign.

Ms McEntee spoke about the legislative and cultural changes that are required to tackle what Taoiseach Leo Varadkar described this week as an "epidemic" of violence against women.

As reported by the Irish Mirror on Monday, the number of women who were the victim of homicides in 2022 was 13 – almost double the 2021 figure.

Asked about how she felt about seeing these figures as a woman, Ms McEntee admitted that they were frightening.

She added: "It hits you every single time. I certainly felt last year and even this year it was happening too often.

"I think particularly for women when you read that, you're just thinking why or how.

"We're talking about domestic violence more. We're doing more, we're committed to doing more, particularly after Covid.

"The fact that there were more women killed last year, it just really doesn't sit well.

"You think it should be turning. People should be thinking twice about it, we should be seeing figures going in the opposite direction.

"It makes me more determined to actually turn those figures around and have less women in that situation.

"It's upsetting. It's upsetting for every woman to see that.

"The Garda figures last year showed that more women were killed in domestic incidents than there were more general homicides.

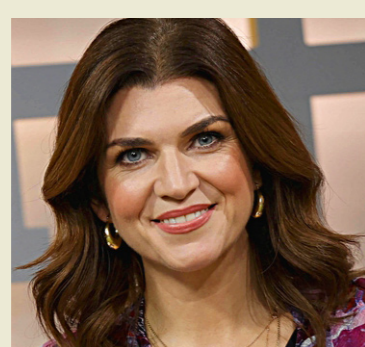
"We should be screaming from the rooftops when that happens.

"We have a plan in place. We're working towards it.

"But everybody should be sitting up and saying, 'Why is this happening? How can I do more? How can I prevent this from happening?'"

The Government published its Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence last year.

At the launch, Ms McEntee, alongside then-Tánaiste Leo Varadkar and Equality Minister Roderic O'Gorman stated that public buy-in was required.



STORIES Muireann O'Connell

TV star says it's not OK & 'make a fuss'

BY MARISA MACKLE

TV star Muireann O'Connell has urged women to "make a fuss" if they experience sexual harassment.

Speaking to comedian Emma Doran on their joint podcast, *And Another Thing*, Muireann shared some upsetting stories sent in to her by listeners, adding: "We have to do something."

She told her listeners that women should not stay quiet.

Muireann continued: "Make a fuss, tell everyone. If you can't call it out, tell someone about it.

"Don't let anyone ever say that you're hysterical, that you're making a big deal out of nothing, that you can't take a joke. That's not true.

"We do not have to be OK with what people are doing to us." Emma said she was "so shocked but not surprised" by the influx of stories, but said she experienced "endless flashers" as a teen.

The Dubliner said: "At the time, we were all told that the general thing was it's harmless. He's harmless. It's harmless."

She told of her shock when a flasher once jumped out in front of her as she walked to her car.

Emma said: "A flasher came at me. He jumped towards me. So, I actually jumped out onto the road."

She added that she reported the incident to gardai, but she was still "really, really nervous" about walking back to her car after the upsetting encounter with the flasher.

"I think more people are on board trying to bring about change"

HELEN McENTEE SPEAKS TO THE IRISH MIRROR

SUPPORT Helen McEntee speaks to our reporter



We should be screaming from the rooftops about violence against women



SHOCKING Monday's report

» McEntee says a plan is in place

» But she admits more needs done



CAMPAIGN Irish Mirror lifts lid on violence



MESSAGE Survivor Leona O'Callaghan

Minister unable to interfere in sentences

EXCLUSIVE BY LOUISE BURNE

JUSTICE Minister Helen McEntee has said that she cannot interfere in cases where judges allow rapists to serve sentences concurrently.

In an interview with the Irish Mirror as part of our Stop The Violence campaign, Ms McEntee said that separation of powers means the courts' system is independent of the Government.

Several survivors of rape or sexual abuse have raised issues about the fact that if their assaulter is convicted of more than one crime or is already in prison, they may not serve time for their second crime.

Limerick woman Leona O'Callaghan previously described this as receiving a "free rape".

She was raped as a child by Patrick O'Dea, 52. When he was sentenced he was already serving a 15-year prison term over a different rape and was given a concurrent sentence.

Ms O'Callaghan told a conference in 2019: "To me, it felt like a message that either my or the other girl's rape didn't really matter. Our legal system says he gets a free one. I never did find out which one of us was the free rape."

POWER

Asked about this case, Ms McEntee said that while not all sentences have to run concurrently, it is not in her power to dictate to judges about how sentences are handed down.

She explained: "Unfortunately, it's not something that I can intervene in. With the separation of powers, it is for a judge to decide.

"While I would love to, in those kinds of instances, make my own opinion known and to direct in whatever way from a Minister for Justice point of view, I'm not allowed to.

"You do have certain cases where you do have consecutive sentences.

"What I can do and what I am doing is making sure that there's a greater focus on education within the judiciary when it comes to rape, sexual assault, domestic violence cases.

"We have what's called Supporting a Victims' Journey. That's all about how we can support victims through the judicial process.

"We have a plan around training judges, that's already started."

news@irishmirror.ie

13 women killed in Ireland last year, double the number in 2021

31,000 people contacted Women's Aid last year, 16% more than in 2021



STRATEGY Roderic O'Gorman and Leo Varadkar

Speaking a year on, she admitted that while she believes public support is building, there is a way to go.

She said: "The fact [is] that more women were murdered in their homes than there were homicides.

"The fact that one in every five women have said they've been raped.

"If that was any other crime or statistic, I would wonder would people be marching on the streets and screaming and roaring the place down? I do think people are listening. I do think they've sat up.

I do think more people are on board with trying to bring about change. I think we need to just keep talking about it. It's like a lot of issues, it comes into the domain and then it often leaves it."

Figures published by Women's Aid earlier this week showed the number of people contacting the service increased by 16% in 2022, with more than 31,000 contacts.

Ms McEntee said that while the figures are stark, they are also positive as it shows that women are coming forward to seek help.

However, she also believes that the figure is just the "tip of the iceberg" and we do not know the full extent of

domestic violence in Ireland. The minister continued: "When you look at the figures that were published last week, the CSO figures as well, the sexual violence surveys, one in five women have been raped or sexually assaulted.

GROUP

"You apply that to any group of people you know, any group of girls that you're a part of or any room you walk into.

"We're only getting the tip of the iceberg here."

The lack of Irish refuge spaces in Ireland has been long criticised. The Istanbul Convention calls for Ireland

to have 476 refuge spaces. The Domestic Violence Strategy, however, commits to doubling Ireland's space from 140 to 280 over the plan's five-year life span.

Ms McEntee said that these targets will be expanded and the total number of required spaces will be put in place in later plans.

During her first three years at the helm of the Department of Justice, the minister has brought in a number of new laws to tackle gender-based violence.

This includes CoCo's law, which criminalised the distribution of intimate images without consent.

Legislation to make stalking and

non-fatal manual strangulation will be enacted in the coming weeks and the maximum sentences for assault causing harm will be increased.

However, Ms McEntee accepts that more needs to be done.

She explained that plans are to be put in place to have specialised domestic and sexual violence judges and courts.

This will be done she explained, so that there is an

understanding of what victims go through, how you can re-traumatise victims through the process."

The minister added: "But also what is appropriate in terms of the crime and the sentence matching each other.

"Often what we see and what people feel is that the sentence simply doesn't match the crime that's happened." Ms McEntee said that a



SCANDAL OF THE THREAT FACING IRISH FEMALES

BY LARISSA NOLAN

MURDER victims in Ireland are now more likely to be innocent women in their own homes than gangland deaths.

That's the stark statistic cited by Det Sgt Laura Sweeney, the country's top female officer fighting domestic abuse.

She said the numbers of women killed by a current or ex partner, often in the supposed safety of the home, now exceeds those involved in organised crime.

DS Sweeney – of the Garda's National Domestic Abuse Unit – highlighted the direct link between domestic violence and the sharp rise in rates of female killings.

She spoke to the Irish Mirror as our special investigation revealed how the numbers of women and girls who suffered violent deaths almost doubled in one year.

Our data found there were 13 female victims of homicides in 2022 – a hike of 85% in one year. Already in 2023, there have been seven killings.

Almost 90% knew the attacker and more than 75% happened at home. Since 2019, there have been 38 femicides, with the average age of 40.

DS Sweeney said: "A murder victim is more likely to be a domestic homicide than a gangland killing."

"Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said domestic abuse in Ireland is at epidemic proportions and there is nothing to dissuade from that."

"All statistics and figures back it up and most domestic homicide victims are female, at 52%."

"My job is to demonstrate the direct link between the abuse call into the station or the breach of an order and the domestic homicide."

"It's the motivation when you have an entire family obliterated at the hands of someone they lived with."

"The figures for 2022 were shocking, I would love to say I know why they have risen so much."

TRAINING

"We have domestic abuse policies brought in for training gardai. We have started using risk evaluation tools. We have brought in the crime of coercive control."

"We have all that and yet we still have this rise in women murdered."

"In a lot of cases, there is no preceding domestic abuse call. Why? No one goes from a happy relationship to being bludgeoned to death."

"Something has gone wrong, why aren't people talking to us?"

DS Sweeney is determined to find out and has made it her life's work to curb the epidemic.

Behind the statistics are real lives cruelly cut short.

They include Jennie Poole, who was 24 when she was stabbed to death in her home in Dublin's Finglas by boyfriend Gavin Murphy, and Mary O'Keeffe, 72, burned to death by Michael Leonard who set fire to her car.

DS Sweeney, 45, who has 24 years' experience and has worked in the Garda National Protective Services Unit since 2017.

Homicides more likely to be of women in their own home than gangland executions

PROTECT & SERVE

DS Laura Sweeney urged more victims to speak out



INNOCENT

Jennie Poole was killed by Murphy



DEFENCELESS

Mary O'Keeffe was murdered by Leonard

Garda highlights link between domestic abuse & murder

She had her own wake up call in 2013, when she trained with Women's Aid for two days.

The officer explained: "I realised after about the first hour, we have got this so wrong. We are not doing what we need to be."

On one occasion, she spoke to a woman who described a horrific

attack, which left her lucky to be alive. When Sweeney looked it up on the PULSE system, it was listed as: "Assault causing harm, damage to cheekbone, medical attention."

She said: "This woman had had a Hoover flex wrapped around her neck repeatedly and pulled and when that didn't kill her, he picked her up by the

neck and smashed her face off a bedside locker."

"She had told gardai this in her statement. But somehow that was drilled down to eight words."

"We were not seeing domestic abuse for what it is. We were not linking domestic killings with abuse calls. That has all changed."

"Now, gardai will deal with you professionally, empathetically and appropriately. We see you."

"We are conscious one in four women are victims of domestic abuse."

DS Sweeney says abuse "thrives on silence" and the abuser will only

stop when the consequences become too great for them."

She explained how gardai use high-risk indicators to recognise those caught in it. Those who have been throttled are at gravest risk.

She added: "A major risk is non-fatal strangulation, any strangulation increases the risk of homicide by 750%. Any attempt to obstruct your airways is the mark of an abuser. Most domestic homicides occur in the upper torso region."

"We also know that physical abuse often starts during pregnancies."

"Another indicator is animal abuse, if someone can kill a creature, they are showing what they are capable of."

"You're at the greatest risk when

you are contemplating leaving or have left the relationship."

It ties in with how domestic abuse reports rose after lockdowns, by 16% according to Women's Aid, as the return of normal life allowed victims a chance to escape.

DS Sweeney said: "Domestic abuse is like living with a terrorist. You are being hunted."

"When people say, 'Why don't they just leave?' It is so frustrating. The greatest threat is when the abuser senses, believes, or are told the abused partner is leaving, they will then ramp it up so the person thinks, 'I am safer in this relationship than out of it.' Post-separation

abuse is so bad, they will use everything in their reach, peddling lies, the lines of 'poor me' and 'She's crazy. Even in homicide, this is the narrative they keep up in garda interviews."

DS Sweeney will be at the forefront of the battle, to protect these women who are our sisters, friends, mothers and daughters."

She said: "There is great momentum on the issue, from the Justice Minister to the DPP. More people coming forward and we must match that. You don't get a second chance with an abuse victim. There is a lot on our shoulders to get right."

news@irishmirror.ie

Warders 'hid' lag from press

BY DAVID RALEIGH

A REPORT is being compiled into an alleged security breach at Limerick Prison where staff allegedly helped an offender avoid press cameras.

The media were waiting outside Limerick Circuit Court on the day the man was to appear in court.

The matter was brought to the attention of Justice Minister Helen McEntee by Independent TD Mattie McGrath.

In his letter it was alleged a convict who was on bail appealing

a jail sentence "drove into a secure area of Limerick Prison car park".

It's alleged he "was assisted and brought to a secure area in the court by prison staff in an unmarked private car owned by a senior member of staff".

Mr McGrath wrote: "This appears to me to be a misuse of the Limerick prison facilities and a complete disregard for procedures and rules when members of the public have to attend court in a

LETTER Mattie McGrath

completely different way. When the case was over he was again taken through the secure areas without authority and placed back into the senior management's car and taken away from cameras outside the court that were waiting."

An Irish Prison Service spokeswoman confirmed "we have been made aware of an alleged breach of security."

"The Minister has requested a report on the matter."



LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS...

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Send us your good luck messages for the 2023 Ireland World Cup squad and you could feature in our ad campaign!

Simply scan the code below and fill out your message to the team. Add a photo and video too if you want!

We'll select some of your messages to feature as ads in the paper and on Irishmirror.ie. Let's help the nation get right behind the Girls in Green.

As a thank you for helping us get behind the team, you'll also have the chance to win a 58" Samsung Smart TV worth €549 - perfect for watching the games on, thanks to our friends at Currys. So get entering now!



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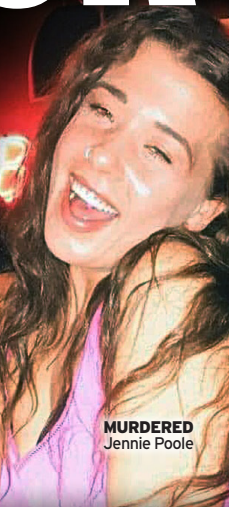
TOLL OF TERROR FOR IRELAND'S WOMEN



BY MICHAEL O'TOOLE
THE number of women and girls killed in Ireland has almost doubled in a year, our investigation can reveal today.

Our analysis of all femicides shows there have been 38 since the start of 2019 - with last year accounting for 13 of that tragic toll. The study also reveals 90% of female homicide victims - including Jasmine McMonagle and Jennie Poole - knew their killer.

SEE PAGES 4&5



» Number of deaths almost doubles » 90% of victims knew their killer

MIRROR LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE VIOLENCE

BY MICHAEL O'ROOLE

The number of women and girls killed in domestic violence in Ireland in 2022 has almost doubled in a new report. Investigation can reveal today.

We have established 13 females were victims of homicides in 2022 – that's an increase of six from the year before representing a massive hike of 83%.

And with half of 2023 still to come, already six women have suffered.

If that grim trend continues, there are likely to be more than 10 women killed in 2023.

An Irish Mirror analysis of all homicides shows there have been 38 since the start of 2019.

In 2019, there were six victims. That was the same as in 2018.

Sammi Copley is the youngest just two when she was murdered by Karen Harrington in her Cork city apartment in July 2019, was the youngest victim.

While the oldest woman to die violently was 88, the average age of the victims was 40.

They were killed by their own partners, including Craig McKinley, three who was killed with her brothers Connor, nine, and seven-year-old Darragh.

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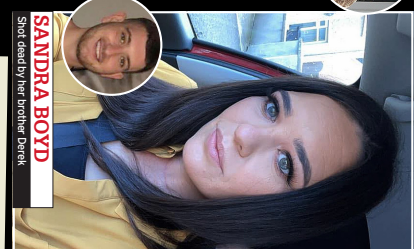
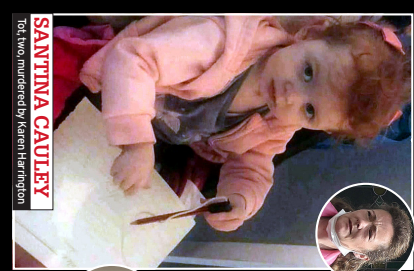
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SANTINA CAULEY
To be murdered by Karen Harrington

SANDRA BOYD
Shot dead by her brother Derek

Investigation stats
No charges: 2 (5.2%)
Convicted: 1 (31.5%)
Person charged and before the courts: 19 (50%)
Instances where suspected killer takes the victim to the murder: 3 (8%)
Cases where the suspect has been found not guilty by reason of insanity: 2 (5.2%)



SEEMA, ASFIRA & FAIZAN BANU
Murdered by Sameer Syed in October 2020

SEEMAS

FATALITIES

>>> Our inquiry reveals shocking levels of attacks on women & girls

>>> 13 killed last year is almost double tragic toll from 2021

>>> With 6 deaths this year already grim total set to rise higher still

>>> How they died:
Strangled (2 (5.2%))
Strangled (4 (10.5%))
Shot (2 (5.2%))
Asox (3 (8%))
Suffocated (12 (6.9%))

Location of deaths:
Public place (3 (8%))
Home (25 (65.2%))
Hospital (2 (6.9%))

>>> Two women died in a year. One was 75-year-old Mary O'Keefe who was found in her apartment in Frinagh, Galway, in February 2022. Her ex-boyfriend, Gavin Murphy, 30, was jailed for life for her murder in April.

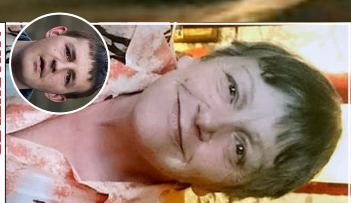
>>> Three women were strangled in their homes in January 2019. A 31-year-old woman suffered a horrendous parental death, her 7-year-old son was murdered and jailed for life with a review after 13 years.

>>> Six women were aged between 15 and 60 and seven were over the age of 61. They didn't know their killer or the person who has been charged over their deaths.

>>> That means 89.5% of female homicide victims who suffered fatal attacks were found in their homes. Among them was mum-of-two Jasmine McMonagle, who was just 28 when she was stabbed to death in her apartment in Frinagh, Galway, in February 2022. Her ex-boyfriend, Gavin Murphy, 30, was jailed for life for her murder in April.

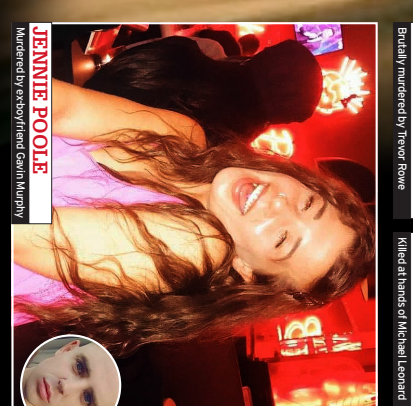
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ANN BUTLER
Brutally murdered by Trevor Rowe

MARY O'KEEFE
Killed at hands of Michael Leonard



JENNIE POOLE
Murdered by ex-boyfriend Gavin Murphy

Together we can end toll of terror
The shocking toll of violence revealed in today's Irish Mirror investigation shows we need to change the way we think about domestic violence. It is the deadliest years was one of the deadliest years against Ireland's women and girls.

Probe after 3 men hurt
AN investigation has been launched after three men were taken to hospital in Dublin last night. It is believed the incident took place on the grounds of Stane Castle in County Wick.



STOP THE VIOLENCE MIRROR CAMPAIGN
Resources are crucial to provide safe haven for victims in the midst of our housing crisis. And we need a national awareness push to educate the public on how to help. Today we launch our Stop the Violence campaign which aims to add our voice to those of victims and families calling 'Stop' until it is heard.

BILLS Building in Dublin €150k spent on Mansion House work and refurb
MORE than €150,000 was spent last year on refurbishment at Dublin's Mansion House. This included the relaying of historic curbstones, the €7,000 purchase of bespoke long chairs, and restoration work on 19th-century stone. A sum of €8,800 was spent by Dublin City Council on glazing to better noise-proof and insulate windows in the Lord Mayor's bedroom. Work carried out by time.

BY KEN FOLEY