

Deputy UN chief hails ‘political courage’ of Latin American countries ‘to confront and end genocide’

A 50 million Euro investment aimed at helping to end the scourge of femicide – where women and girls are killed just because of their gender – was announced at United Nations Headquarters on Thursday, thanks to the ‘political courage’ of a group of Latin American countries, said the UN deputy chief.

[Amina Mohammed](#) was speaking at a high-level event to launch the [Spotlight Initiative](#) in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

She described the joint UN-European Union initiative as “a bold and comprehensive response to the tragedies that we see across the world every day”, aimed at ending violence against women and girls.

“These five countries have shown the political courage to confront and end femicide – a crime that claims the lives of 12 women a day, in Latin America,” said the Deputy Secretary-General.

“Given the pervasive, universal, and entrenched nature of violence against women and girls, we knew that we would need to combine our individual efforts if we were to succeed,” she added.

Latin America is home to 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world and an astonishing 98 per cent of gender-related killings, go unprosecuted.

Ms. Mohammed said that the 50 million Euro investment would help tighten up laws and policy initiatives to curb unchecked violence against women and girls, strengthen institutions and promote gender equality overall.

It will also “provide quality services for survivors, and reparations for victims of violence and their families, producing disaggregated data so we can leave no one behind and empower women’s movements in the five priority countries.”

“Addressing femicide comprehensively from each of these angles is essential to successful and lasting results,” she added.

The UN deputy chief paid tribute to Mariana Lima – killed by her police officer husband in 2010 – and her mother, Irinea Buendía, who challenged the Mexican legal system for six years until her daughter’s murderer was brought to justice, and paid tribute to a survivor of a brutal attack, who was in the meeting at UN Headquarters, Natalia Ponce de León. She thanked her for her courage, “coming here to be with us to remind us that we will not stay silent until we end violence against women.”

“We need to end impunity for perpetrators and ensure that no woman or girl experiences violence either in the home, from a partner, or in any public space including from gangs, traffickers or others,” said Ms. Mohammed.

More to come on this story later.