



Russian Federation
Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Founded in 1983, **The Advocates for Human Rights** (“The Advocates”) is a volunteer-based nongovernmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates is committed to ensuring human rights protection for women around the world. The Advocates’ Women’s Human Rights Program has published 27 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, frequently provides consultation and commentary on drafting laws on domestic violence, and trains lawyers, police, prosecutors, and judges to implement new and existing laws on domestic violence effectively.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Russia has failed to effectively address its epidemic of domestic violence. This failure reflects a patriarchal society in which people widely believe violence against women is acceptable, especially within the context of family, and should not be spoken about or punished. In 2017, Russia reduced accountability for offenders by decriminalizing most forms of domestic violence. Many forms of domestic violence are now “private prosecutions,” placing the onus on victims to act as investigator and prosecutor. The law enforcement response to domestic violence is inadequate. Police are reluctant to investigate or pursue charges, and at times, they communicate inappropriately with the perpetrator, fostering impunity and placing the victim in greater danger. Resources for victims are scarce. The government does not fund or cooperate with NGOs that assist victims and has designated many NGOs “foreign agents,” a label that hinders their work. This report addresses the Russian Federation’s failure to comply with its international human rights obligations and makes recommendations to address and improve the situation for women’s human rights in Russia.

II. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

A. 2013 Universal Periodic Review

2. During Russia’s last Universal Periodic Review in 2013, several countries made recommendations related to domestic violence.¹ Russia accepted these recommendations, but failed to implement them. Russia has not increased efforts to prevent domestic violence, and has hindered the work of NGOs that assist victims. Russia failed to adopt legislation or programs to combat domestic violence, and instead broadly decriminalized certain acts of domestic violence.

1. *Ratify the Istanbul Convention*

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented

3. Russia accepted a recommendation from Finland to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).² As of September 22, 2017, Russia had not ratified the Istanbul Convention.³

2. *Undertake legal reforms on violence against women, including adoption of legislation on domestic violence and national action plans*

Status of Implementation: Partially Accepted, Not Implemented

4. South Africa recommended Russia “fast track the drafting of a federal bill on prevention of violence in the family,” which Russia noted.⁴ Russia partially accepted this recommendation, responding that a working group had been established to draft a bill to prevent domestic violence, but contending existing law already prohibited all forms of violence within the family and provided appropriate penalties. A draft bill was prepared and submitted for approval in 2014, but never adopted.⁵ Brazil recommended Russia “develop a comprehensive action plan to combat domestic violence against women and

girls.”⁶ Russia has not done so. Uruguay recommended Russia strengthen all measures to combat violence against women and girls, including through the adoption of a law to criminalize violence against women. Russia partially accepted this recommendation but has not implemented it.

3. *Take other measures, including adoption of legislation, to address domestic violence, violence against women and discrimination against women*

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented

5. Several countries made recommendations pertaining to the adoption of laws on domestic violence and violence against women, as well as undertaking measures to eliminate discrimination against women.⁷ Russia has not implemented these recommendations.

4. *Recommendations related to human rights defenders*

- a. *Repeal or modify Foreign Agents Law and definition of treason*

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented

6. Several countries recommended Russia repeal or modify legislation requiring NGOs receiving foreign funding to register as foreign agents, and amend the definition of treason. Russia did not accept these recommendations.⁸

- b. *Combat harassment of NGOs*

Status of Implementation: Partially Accepted, Not Implemented

7. Russia partially accepted recommendations to stop harassment and discrediting of NGOs.⁹ NGOs report, however, that the government is continuing to hinder their work through intimidation and the Foreign Agents Law.

B. Domestic Legal Framework

8. **Russia’s criminal legislation does not punish domestic violence in line with international standards.** There is no specific crime of domestic violence under Russia’s Criminal Code.¹⁰ In addition, recent amendments have curtailed the scope of prohibited acts of domestic violence under the Criminal Code. 2016 and 2017 amendments to the Criminal Code mean that only aggravated battery, repeated battery, and battery that harms the health of another are considered crimes. Now, first-time non-aggravated battery and battery of “close persons that resulted in physical pain but did not inflict harm or other consequences” constitute lesser administrative offenses.¹¹
9. Prior to July 2016, non-aggravated battery was a crime.¹² Russian law contained no other definition of “domestic violence.” **In July 2016, parliament decriminalized non-aggravated battery in most circumstances,** making such offenses administrative rather than criminal. An amendment retained battery of “close persons,” including close relatives and household members, as a crime.¹³
10. **In January 2017, a further amendment decriminalized violence against close persons.** The amendment to Article 116 provides “battery of close persons that resulted in physical pain but did not inflict harm or other consequences” is no longer a crime.¹⁴ A first conviction for domestic battery is an administrative offense when no “serious”

bodily harm results.¹⁵ Criminal charges will potentially result only from attacks causing severe injuries, such as broken bones, or after repeated offenses.¹⁶ Generally, criminal charges are not considered unless more than one incident of domestic violence happens within one year, so that repeated abuse taking place more than one year after the first incident still is not a crime.¹⁷ Russian President Putin signed the law in February 2017.¹⁸

11. **The law requires the victim, rather than the state, to shoulder the responsibility of holding offenders accountable.** Most domestic violence cases require “private prosecution.” The victim must initiate the case, formulate charges, investigate and collect evidence, and act as prosecutor.¹⁹ Placing the burden on the victim, rather than the state, to prosecute acts of domestic violence does not comply with best practice standards. In 2014, a draft law to eliminate private prosecution for domestic violence (requiring that state prosecutors have jurisdiction), was submitted for consideration by Russia’s parliament, but not adopted. Furthermore, laws governing private prosecutions expressly encourage reconciliation, upon which proceedings are subject to termination.²⁰
12. **In the absence of effective criminal prosecution, victim protections are woefully inadequate.** To the extent they exist at all, local or regional laws addressing domestic violence are reportedly ineffective.²¹ Russia does not have a specific domestic violence law that would provide victims with an order for protection and lacks a comprehensive approach to the prevention and elimination of violence against women.²² As confirmed by an attorney, there is no procedure for the issuance of restraining orders, and local law enforcement lacks the authority to separate abuser and victim.²³

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Constitutional and Legislative Framework

13. **Administrative and criminal procedures for domestic violence generally place the burden on victims to privately prosecute their cases.** This requirement deters victims from pursuing charges. Cases involving injuries that do not amount to grievous physical harm²⁴ or death are only initiated if the victim submits a statement, in a prescribed form, investigates, and collects evidence on her own.²⁵ Police and prosecutors do not assist victims.²⁶ Reconciliation is considered a primary goal in “private prosecutions,” leaving the victim vulnerable to pressure from the abuser.²⁷ Many victims choose not to seek relief, and many who initiate private prosecutions later abandon them because of the difficulties of the process, fear, or threats. About 90% of private prosecution cases are terminated, either due to reconciliation or failure to fulfill the legal requirements for the proceedings.²⁸

Context, statistics, budget, cooperation with civil society

14. **Russia does not maintain centralized, disaggregated data on domestic violence.**²⁹ According to the government’s own statistics, 40% of all violent crimes take place within the home.³⁰ In 2013, Russia’s Interior Ministry estimated that 14,000 women per year, or 38 women every day, died from domestic violence.³¹
15. **Russia’s Foreign Agents Law also hinders the capacity of civil society** to respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence. See paragraph 23 below for more information.

Right to an effective remedy, impunity

16. **Interviews and secondary sources reveal great frustration with the law enforcement response to domestic violence.** 72% of women who contacted an NGO's national hotline did not seek help from police, and 80% of those who did were dissatisfied with the response.³² One lawyer described typical police attitudes as requiring homicidal-level violence to secure their attention, suggesting that police intonate "If there is any dead body, we will come,"³³ or "Call us if you're murdered."³⁴ After one victim called a hotline, the responding officer immediately called her husband and admonished him about his use of violence: "if you do it, do it quietly."³⁵ Police are often not responsive to domestic violence calls because of stereotypical attitudes, including attitudes that blame the victim, or that suggest the abuser has the right to beat family members.³⁶ Lack of effective response can lead to greater injury or death. One man beat his wife to death with a screwdriver after she sought help from police multiple times.³⁷
17. As described above, victims are generally expected to initiate and conduct their own prosecutions for domestic violence. Russia provides few legal resources, however, for victims to do so. **Free legal representation is neither provided nor financially supported by the government.**³⁸ Victims of domestic violence are therefore at a tremendous disadvantage; in many cases she must serve as investigator and prosecutor, and unrepresented persons typically lack knowledge and skills to present the case in court.³⁹ Unless the victim obtains services from one of the small number of NGOs that provide representation, she must proceed on her own. This gap aggravates an already dangerous situation for a woman who may still be living with her abuser.⁴⁰
18. **Civil punishments for domestic violence, when imposed, are relatively modest fines** (from 5,000 to 30,000 rubles), 60 to 120 hours of compulsory work or, rarely, 10–15 days of confinement.⁴¹ Without procedures to keep the abuser away from the victim, these penalties are ineffective. Fines and reduced-pay compulsory work impose burdens on victims by reducing family budgets. The law does not provide victims with financial protection.⁴²

Discrimination against Women

19. **Domestic violence is epidemic, widely accepted, and perpetuated by harmful misperceptions about women.** Women outnumber men in Russia (according to Pew Research Center, as of 2015, there were 86.8 men per 100 women),⁴³ but women continue to be viewed and treated as a disfavored minority in a patriarchal culture.⁴⁴ A resurgence of conservative values has eroded small gains that had been made in offering help to victims. "Conservative values" in Russia often "mean that [a] husband can beat his wife because he has the family authority."⁴⁵
20. **Harmful stereotypes and discrimination against women underpinned the 2017 legal reforms that decriminalized domestic violence.** Senator Yelena Mizulina was a leader of the efforts to decriminalize domestic violence.⁴⁶ Mizulina stated: "Women are not offended when we see a man beating his wife,"⁴⁷ echoing the widespread notion that violence is the prerogative of the man of the house. Mizulina also reportedly attributed the primary problem in the family not to domestic violence, but to women's aggressiveness and lack of respect for men.⁴⁸ Her words mirror ingrained societal notions that people who speak up about domestic violence damage the family unit.⁴⁹

21. Such harmful attitudes also are prevalent among systems actors who respond to domestic violence and, at times, erroneously hold the victim responsible. **Authorities' response to domestic violence indicates a failure to identify the primary aggressor and recognize women's use of self-defense.**⁵⁰ In some cases, women who are unable to escape an abuser have defended themselves yet been charged with a crime. One woman was badly beaten by her abuser, who tried to throw her off a balcony. When no one responded to her cries for help, she used a knife to protect herself. She was charged criminally for injuring the abuser.⁵¹ In another case, a woman whose husband attempted to kill her fought back, and he was killed. She was convicted of murder, spending six months in prison before public outcry resulted in her release.⁵²

Gender-based violence

22. **Victim services in Russia are severely limited and inaccessible to much of the population.** Russia has no coordinated national programs to address domestic violence or protect victims. There is a dramatic shortage of crisis centers and shelters. Moscow has approximately 150 shelter spaces to serve a city of 12 million people.⁵³ The vast majority of social assistance centers offer general services not limited to victims of domestic violence, and they lack staff trained on domestic violence.⁵⁴ Nationally, at best, existing shelters provide only a few hundred beds in a country of 140 million. Government-funded shelters are generally limited to women registered as residents of the local municipality.⁵⁵ Those few shelters that might accept a victim not registered in the municipality typically do so only if she can pay for their services.⁵⁶ Approximately 20 NGOs throughout the country also operate a small number of crisis centers and shelters.⁵⁷

Human rights defenders

23. **The 2012 Foreign Agents Law hampers NGO efforts to assist victims of domestic violence.**⁵⁸ The law requires groups to register as foreign agents if they receive even minimal amounts of funding from any foreign source, and engage in “political activity,” including all aspects of human and civil rights advocacy.⁵⁹ Many have shut down after being designated foreign agents, which is tantamount to being labeled spy or traitor.⁶⁰ Nearly 100 organizations are listed “foreign agents,” including numerous human rights groups and organizations focused on the rights of women.⁶¹ One NGO, which is Russia's largest organization offering shelter and services for victims of domestic violence, is deemed a foreign agent. Its director says the designation has had a “paralyzing” effect on its work.⁶²

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

24. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of the Russian Federation:
- Ratify the **Istanbul Convention** without delay.
 - Adopt comprehensive federal **legislation defining and prohibiting domestic violence** in line with international standards.
 - Amend the **Criminal Code to criminalize domestic violence**, including assaults with low-level injuries, and ensure that criminal penalties increase for repeated domestic violence offenses. Ensure that the law provides criminal penalties for acts of

domestic violence are commensurate with, or more punitive than, other acts of violence. Ensure that repeated convictions for domestic violence result in enhanced penalties.

- Amend the law to require **public prosecution of all forms of domestic violence**, including assaults with low-level injuries.
- Adopt legislation granting victims the remedy of a **civil order for protection**, including an eviction, and ensure violations of such orders constitute a crime.
- **Eliminate laws and procedures recommending reconciliation** of abuser and victim.
- **Eliminate the practice of terminating prosecution** upon reconciliation.
- Ensure all reported cases of domestic violence are promptly and thoroughly **investigated, criminally prosecuted, and appropriately punished** upon conviction.
- Ensure that all reports of domestic violence are documented in a **written report by responding law enforcement officers**.
- Ensure and support **free and accessible legal representation** for victims of domestic violence in court proceedings, and, until public prosecution is required, in criminal proceedings against their abusers.
- Create and provide to first responders and other systems actors detailed **information about victims' rights** in cases of domestic violence, and how to exercise those rights, with referrals to organizations that serve domestic violence victims.
- Engage in comprehensive **national education** to encourage recognition and protection of equal rights of women, prevention of domestic violence, and eliminating discrimination at all levels of society.
- Create and implement effective **public education to raise awareness** of the equal rights of women and to encourage prevention, and reporting, of incidents of domestic violence. Include education about equal rights and status of women, and prevention of domestic violence, in school and university curricula.
- Implement a comprehensive system for **collection and analysis of data** on domestic violence, disaggregated from other crimes of physical violence, including analysis of familial or household relationships and the sex of victims and perpetrators.
- Ensure and fund **regular and comprehensive training for systems actors**, with a priority for police officers, led by or in consultation with NGOs that serve victims, based on best practices including the dynamics of domestic violence, relevant laws, sensitivity to victims, identification of the predominant aggressor, promoting victim safety, and holding offenders accountable
- Ensure victims of domestic violence have access to adequate **shelters, hotlines, crisis services, rights education, legal aid, and other services** in both rural and urban areas.
- Increase **cooperation with, and funding for, NGOs** that assist domestic violence victims.

- **Repeal or modify the Foreign Agents Law** so human and civil rights organizations that assist domestic violence victims are not hindered in their work.
- Establish and fund a **monitoring program** to ensure that policies and practices meet internationally accepted best practices and requiring at least annual reporting of the results of program monitoring.

¹ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 23. Those recommendations were made by Myanmar, Philippines, Brazil, and Serbia. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1. See *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.106 (Myanmar), 140.108 (Philippines), and 140.115 (Serbia). Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

² *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.23. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 7. Also available online at

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; Council of Europe, “Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 210, Status as of 22/09/2017,” accessed Sept. 22, 2017, http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures?p_auth=fxFWuapW.

³ Council of Europe, “Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 210, Status as of 22/09/2017,” accessed Sept. 22, 2017, <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures>.

⁴ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1- ¶ 24. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

⁵ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.107. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 24, and Annex at 15. Also available online at

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *see also* Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 18 of the Convention: Eighth periodic report of States parties due in 2014: Russian Federation*, (Aug. 22, 2014), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/RUS/8- ¶ 105. Also available online at

<http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsnINnqKYBbHCTOaqVs8CBP3TmYlAA2CV9d4dYvKMX4uI0T0Hx5zdJ2VaX%2f6WL6xcEwL5AiK3qIOxvGMgmtwldIMYgm7%2fCihL6Ea332oAB9e>.

⁶ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.113. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc.

A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 24. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

⁷ These recommendations included: further enhance the prevention of domestic violence (Myanmar); continue its efforts to enact laws addressing domestic violence, especially against women (Philippines); adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women (Poland); consider the adoption of a comprehensive law and action plan on violence against women (State of Palestine); continue efforts toward the total elimination of discrimination and violence against women (Rwanda); consider approving a law on violence against women to conform with the recommendation made by CEDAW (Chile); continue actions against domestic violence (Serbia). *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.106, 140.108- 140.110, 140.112, 140.114, 140.115. Also available online at

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

⁸ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.165, 140.168-140.174, 140.176, 140.178-140.184. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 30. Also available online at

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

⁹ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation*, (July 8, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14, ¶ 140.175, 140.177. Also available online at http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_RussianFederation_E.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Russian Federation, Addendum*, (Sept. 2, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/24/14/Add.1, ¶ 29. Also available online at

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/RU/A_HRC_24_14_Add.1_Russian%20Federation_E_iDrits.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

¹⁰ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.

¹¹ The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center, *Russian Federation: Decriminalization of Domestic Violence*, LL File No. 2017-014703, (June 2017), 3-4. Also available online at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/domestic-violence/russia-decriminalization-domestic-violence.pdf>.

¹² *Id.* at 2.

¹³ Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.

¹⁴ Law No. 8-FZ, Feb. 7, 2017.

¹⁵ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Ivan Nechepurenko, *Russia Moves to Soften Domestic Violence Law*, The New York Times, Jan. 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/25/world/europe/russia-domestic-violence.html>; Shaun Walker, *Putin approves legal change that decriminalizes some domestic violence*, The Guardian, Feb. 7, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/07/putin-approves-change-to-law-decriminalising-domestic-violence>.

¹⁹ Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Chapter 16, Articles 115-116 (1996); Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation, Articles 20 (2) and 318 (as amended 2012).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.

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- ²² Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Russian Federation*, (Aug. 16, 2010), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/USR/CO/7, ¶ 22. Also available online at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-USR-CO-7.pdf>.
- ²³ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.
- ²⁴ Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.
- ²⁵ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ ANNA Centre for the Prevention of Violence, *Domestic Violence Against Women In The Russian Federation: Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Moscow: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Oct. 2015). Also available online at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/domestic-violence/russia-decriminalization-domestic-violence.pdf>.
- ²⁹ *Russian Federation: Briefing to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, Amnesty International, (July 2010). Also available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/022/2010/en/>; Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.
- ³⁰ Lucian Kim, *Rights Advocates Warn Russian Domestic Abuse Law Will 'Protect the Oppressor'*, National Public Radio, Feb. 17, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/02/17/515765902/rights-advocates-warn-russian-domestic-abuse-law-will-protect-the-oppressor>, citing <https://ria.ru/society/20151002/1295439851.html> (in Russian).
- ³¹ Christine Asquith, *At least 12,000 people killed by domestic violence every year? Russia's not even sure*, PRI's The World, Mar. 10, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-10/least-12000-people-killed-domestic-violence-every-year-russias-not-even-sure>.
- ³² ANNA Centre for the Prevention of Violence, *Domestic Violence Against Women In The Russian Federation: Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Moscow: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Oct. 2015). Also available online at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/domestic-violence/russia-decriminalization-domestic-violence.pdf>.
- ³³ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.
- ³⁴ Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.
- ³⁵ Speak Truth To Power, a project of NYSUT and the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights, *2010 Interview with Marina Pislakova*, <http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/defenders/marina-pisklakova/>.
- ³⁶ Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.
- ³⁷ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ ANNA Centre for the Prevention of Violence, *Domestic Violence Against Women In The Russian Federation: Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Moscow: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Oct. 2015), 10 – 11. Also available online at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/domestic-violence/russia-decriminalization-domestic-violence.pdf>.
- ⁴⁰ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.
- ⁴³ George Gao, *Why the former USSR has far fewer men than women*, Pew Research Center, Aug. 14, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/14/why-the-former-ussr-has-far-fewer-men-than-women/>.
- ⁴⁴ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *E.g.*, Feliz Solomon, *Russia's Parliament Wants to Decriminalize Domestic Assault*, Time, Jan. 11, 2017, <http://time.com/4632624/russia-putin-domestic-violence-decriminalize-women-children-abuse/>.

⁴⁷ *Why Russia is about to decriminalise wife-beating*, The Economist, Jan. 28, 2017, <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21715726-it-fits-traditional-values-lawmakers-say-why-russia-about-decriminalise-wife-beating>.

⁴⁸ Nadezda Azhgikhina, *Russians Don't Want To Live In The Middle Ages*, The Nation, Feb. 1, 2017, www.thenation.com/article/russians-dont-want-to-live-in-the-middle-ages/.

⁴⁹ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Skype interview with Lawyer, Sept. 14, 2017.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *Russia: Bill to Decriminalize Domestic Violence*, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 23, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/23/russia-bill-decriminalize-domestic-violence>.

⁵⁴ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.

⁵⁵ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 18, 2017.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Written interview with Lawyer, Sept. 12, 2017.

⁵⁸ Law No. 121-FZ, July 20, 2012.

⁵⁹ *Russia: Government vs. Rights Groups*, Human Rights Watch, Sept. 8, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/russia-government-against-rights-groups-battle-chronicle>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Anna Nemtsova, *In Russia, activists push to enact more protections against domestic violence*, PRI's The World, Mar. 9, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-09/russia-activists-push-enact-more-protections-against-domestic-violence>.