

Group: Domestic Abuse Is Up

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The number of children killed by husbands as revenge against their wives and the number of women who suffered violence from police have grown in Russia in the last two years, women's rights advocates said Thursday.

Some 14,000 Russian women die from domestic violence every year, or one every 40 minutes, according to a report released Thursday, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The report, drafted by Anna, a nongovernmental organization seeking to prevent violence against women, cited 2008 data from the Interior Ministry, the latest publicly available.

Andrei Sinelnikov, deputy director of Anna, said the actual figures are higher because the ministry did not count women who were hospitalized and subsequently died from injuries sustained in domestic abuse.

Nina Ostanina, a member of the State Duma's Committee for Women, Family and Youth Affairs, as well as Sinelnikov said it was unclear why the Interior Ministry had not reported data for last year.

Irina Petrova, a spokeswoman for the ministry's department for protecting public order, could not say late Thursday why there were no new statistics.

In the United States — which has a population of 310 million, compared with Russia's 142 million — some 1,000 women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends annually, or three women per day, [according to](#) the U.S.-based Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Russia's poor record on domestic violence can be linked in part to the lack of a legal mechanism for courts to prevent an abusive husband from approaching or contacting his wife, Sinelnikov said.

Another problem is reluctance to assist women who are repeatedly abused, he said. The law requires women to compile the case materials for the court personally, and as a result 80 percent of such lawsuits are rejected based on the plaintiffs' incompetence.

Sixty percent to 70 percent of Russian women fail to report beatings by their husbands, partially because of previous unsuccessful attempts, Sinelnikov said. Many women in abusive marriages die when they try to flee their husbands.

Russia has joined an international campaign to mark Nov. 25 with a series of events aimed at attracting public attention to the issue, he said.

Several public groups will hold a rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad on Saturday. On Dec. 9 they will hold a UN-supported round table to announce that they are seeking investors to create a nationwide, toll-free hotline for women who are victims of domestic violence, Sinelnikov said.

Events running from Thursday through Dec. 10 are collectively called the "16 Days Against Violence Toward Women," an international campaign held since 1991 and supported by more than 1,000 organizations from some 130 countries, the Stop Violence Association of Crisis Centers for Women [said](#) on its web site.

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