

Sakha Rights Official Calls on Russia To Criminalize Domestic Abuse

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Sardana Guryeva. **Sardana Guryeva / VK**

The top human rights official in Russia's Far East republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has called on federal authorities to pass a law criminalizing domestic abuse after a similar law was passed in Kazakhstan.

“One cannot remain indifferent to tragic cases of domestic violence,” Sakha's human rights ombudswoman Sardana Guryeva [wrote](#) in a VKontakte post. “The horrible events force us to think of how we can prevent such horrors from happening in the future.”

Guryeva's comments were likely inspired by the [high-profile trial](#) of an ex-official in Kazakhstan accused of brutally murdering his wife.

Many in Russia have tuned in to watch live-streamed court proceedings against the Central Asian country's former Economy Minister Quandyq Bishimbaev, who was implicated in killing his wife Saltanat Nukenova at a restaurant in the capital Astana last year.

Public outrage over Nukenova's murder prompted Kazakh officials to adopt a bill criminalizing domestic violence, which President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev [signed into law](#) on Monday.

"The time has come to take decisive action to prevent this unacceptable evil from happening," Guryeva said.

"It is necessary to join forces so that everyone can feel safe in their home. [It is necessary to] create a society where domestic violence will be absolutely unacceptable and violators will bear the deserved criminal punishment," she added, vowing to relay her proposal to the "relevant authorities."

Russia decriminalized first-time domestic violence offenses that result in "minor harm" in 2017, a move that activists say has enabled abusers and strengthened the culture of impunity around these crimes.

Subsequent [attempts](#) by activists and opposition lawmakers to pass legislation to protect women yielded no results. Many have [warned](#) that domestic violence cases in Russia will increase rapidly as more men return from the front lines in Ukraine.

Sakha, Russia's largest ethnic republic by land area, [established](#) its first and only help center for victims of domestic violence in November 2023 following the [brutal murder](#) of 26-year-old Nadezhda Ammosova by her partner.

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