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Russian Government Rejects Bill Decriminalizing Domestic Violence

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Yelena Mizulina **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP**

The Russian government's commission on legislation has rejected a bill that proposed decriminalizing domestic violence, the Vedomosti business daily reported Thursday.

The bill was drafted by Yelena Mizulina, the ultraconservative Federation Council senator best known for her involvement in the notorious "gay propaganda" law.

The initiative proposed decriminalizing battery within families. It was introduced to the State Duma in July and followed amendments to the Criminal Code that turned battery into an administrative offense for first-time offenders.

"Battery carried out toward family members should be an administrative offense," Mizulina said back then. "You don't want people to be imprisoned for two years and labeled a criminal for the rest of their lives for a slap."

The government review of Mizulina's bill stated that she failed to acknowledge that

classifying domestic battery as a criminal offense is aimed at tackling domestic violence.

The side note to the bill also doesn't offer any evidence that these amendments are necessary, the report says. The ruling United Russia party deputies in the State Duma do not support the initiative, Vedomosti reported, citing an unidentified source in the party.

Human rights NGOs
suggest that more than 14,000 women die every year in Russia
as a result of domestic abuse. Several women's rights organizations have proposed a domestic violence law and introduced it into the State Duma. Their bill has been sitting on the shelf for more than a year.

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