

Russia Pledges Harsher Domestic Violence Laws, Weeks After Decriminalizing Abuse

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Senior Airman Rusty Frank / Wiicommons

Just weeks after Russia's State Duma scrapped prison sentences for “first-time” abusers, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has signed new proposals that pledge stricter legislation against domestic violence.

Medvedev [signed Russia's latest strategy](#) for tackling gender inequality on Wednesday, International Women's Day.

The government document said that improving legislation to combat violence in the family was key to protecting women and ensuring they could play a full role in Russian society.

The document also pledged that the state would improve childcare provision for children aged three to seven, promote flexible working hours, and provide information programs to engage women in politics.

Related article: ["If He Beats You, It Means He Loves You"](#)

The plans are in stark contrast to Russia's decision in January to downgrade the charge of "battery within families" — assaults which don't result in "substantial bodily harm" — to an administrative offense.

Those found guilty of domestic violence will be fined, but criminal charges are only brought against offenders if beatings take place more than once a year.

Lawmakers said that classifying "battery within families" as a criminal offense would punish parents for physically disciplining their children.

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