

39 People Murdered in Honor Killings in Russia's North Caucasus, Dutch NGO Reports

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Maxim Grigoryev / TASS

At least 39 people have been killed in Russia's North Caucasus in suspected honor killings over the past decade, according to a new report published by a Dutch human rights NGO on Thursday, which also said that the real number of murders was likely to be much higher.

The term honor killings refers to the murder of individuals suspected of infidelity or other "inappropriate" sexual behavior and are predominantly carried out by family members of a victim. Human rights groups have [said](#) that the practice has long been a problem in Russia's predominantly Muslim North Caucasus region.

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Between 2008 and 2017, 36 women and three men became the victims of honor killings in the Russian republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya, according to the "Killed by Gossip" report [published](#) by the Dutch Legal Initiative NGO on Thursday.

The organization added that the real number was likely much higher as the "vast majority of honor killings remain unreported" and local officials refuse to investigate them, citing "cultural norms."

A majority of the victims were young unmarried women between 20 and 30 years of age and less than half of the murders made it into the court system, the NGO said.

Officials in the republic of Chechnya denied the findings of the report in comments to the media on Thursday.

"There is no such thing [as honor killings] in our republic," Alvi Karimov, the spokesman of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, was [quoted](#) as saying by Interfax on Thursday.

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"You simply won't find any immoral women here, women consuming alcohol," he added.

In comments to the Govorit Moskva radio station, Chechnya's communications minister Dzhambulat Umarov [alleged](#) that the report was part of a smear campaign waged by human rights organizations who have targeted the region to get "publicity on hyped-up issues that they make up themselves."

Legal Initiative is a Dutch based NGO that provides support to victims of human rights abuses in the North Caucasus. The complete Killed By Gossip report can be found on their [website](#).

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