Russian Women Post Bruised Selfies to Push for Domestic Violence Law

By [Reuters](#)

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vudleyv / Instagram

Thousands of Russian women are posting selfies on social media with their faces covered in fake blood and bruises in an effort to push the government to pass a domestic violence law.

A series of recent abuse cases have jolted Russia and prompted fierce discussions about attitudes towards domestic violence in the country.

About one in five Russian women has suffered violence at the hands of a partner, according to official estimates, and human rights activists say the absence of a dedicated law leaves many vulnerable.

Related article: [Russian Cop Jailed for Ignoring Murdered Domestic Violence Victim's Pleas](#)
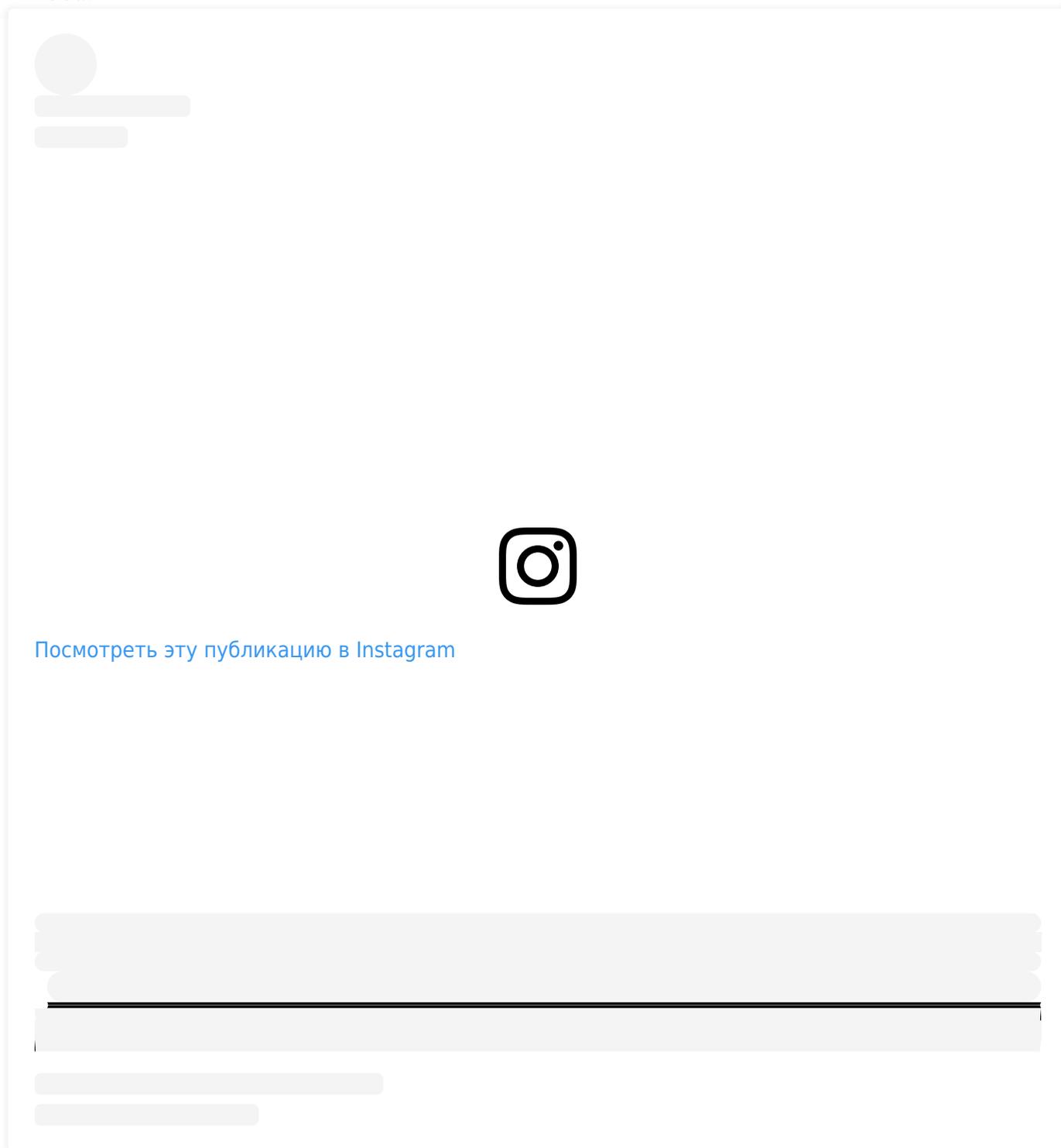
Campaign organizers Alyona Popova and Alexandra Mitroshina urged women to draw cuts

and bruises on their faces with make-up and share pictures on social media with the hashtag in Russian "I didn't want to die."

"I was a victim of domestic abuse," Marina Sabodina posted on Instagram beside a photo with a line of blood drawn across her face. "I know how it is when you are afraid to return home or stay alone with a loved one."

Russian law does not specifically define domestic violence as an offense and provides no mechanism for imposing restraining orders on violent partners, according to Human Rights Watch.

Embed:

Посмотреть эту публикацию в Instagram

The government decriminalized some forms of domestic violence in 2017, a move some Russians said eroded protections for women against abuse.

Supporters of the move said it was introduced to protect parents' right to discipline their children and reduce the state's ability to meddle in family life.

The maximum punishment in Russia for someone who beats a member of their own family is a fine, as long as they do not repeat the offense more than once a year.

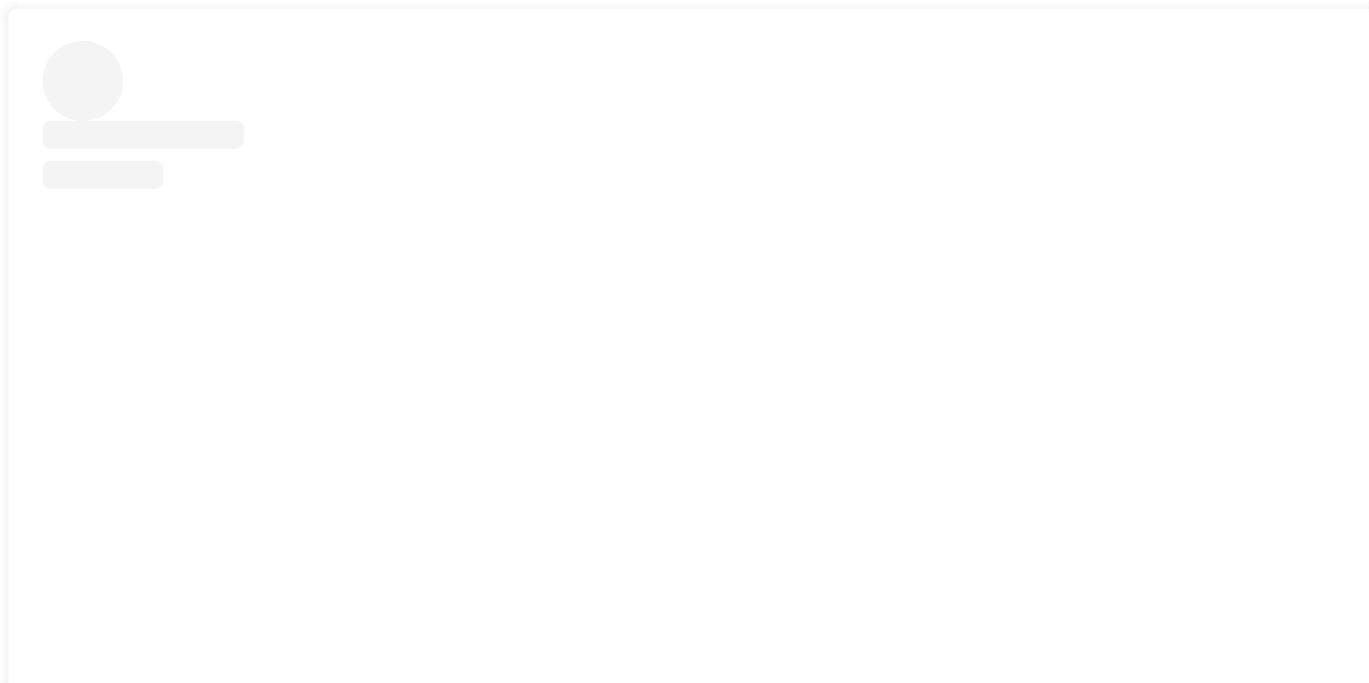Related article: [UN Committee Sides Against Russia in First Domestic Violence Ruling](#)

In Instagram posts that have received more than 400,000 'likes' this week, Popova and Mitroshina cite crimes they say would not have happened if protective measures had been in place.

"The Khachaturian sisters would not exist at all if the state intervened on time and issued a protection order," Popova wrote, referring to three sisters on trial for the murder of their abusive father.

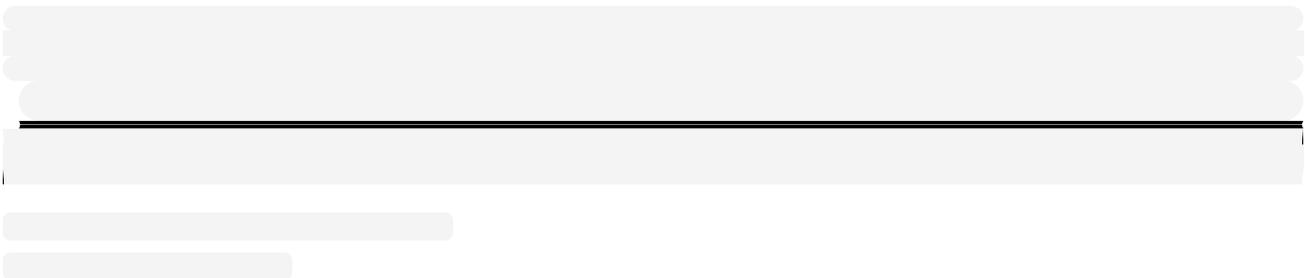The posts link to an online petition demanding a new law signed by more than 580,000 people.

In December, a poll by the Public Opinion Foundation, a think tank, found 55% of Russians thought domestic violence had to be treated as a criminal offense, with only one in four supporting the 2017 law change.

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Russia's Justice Ministry said in a statement that although there was no law on domestic violence, violent acts could still qualify as other punishable crimes, including causing bodily harm and torture.

After the campaign was launched, the head of the upper house of parliament Valentina Matviyenko said lawmakers would look at ways to strengthen protections for victims of domestic violence, local media reported.

This raised hopes that a draft bill campaigners have been lobbying for five years could soon be adopted, said Popova.

In early July the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia failed to protect a woman, who was assaulted, kidnapped and stalked by her former partner.

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