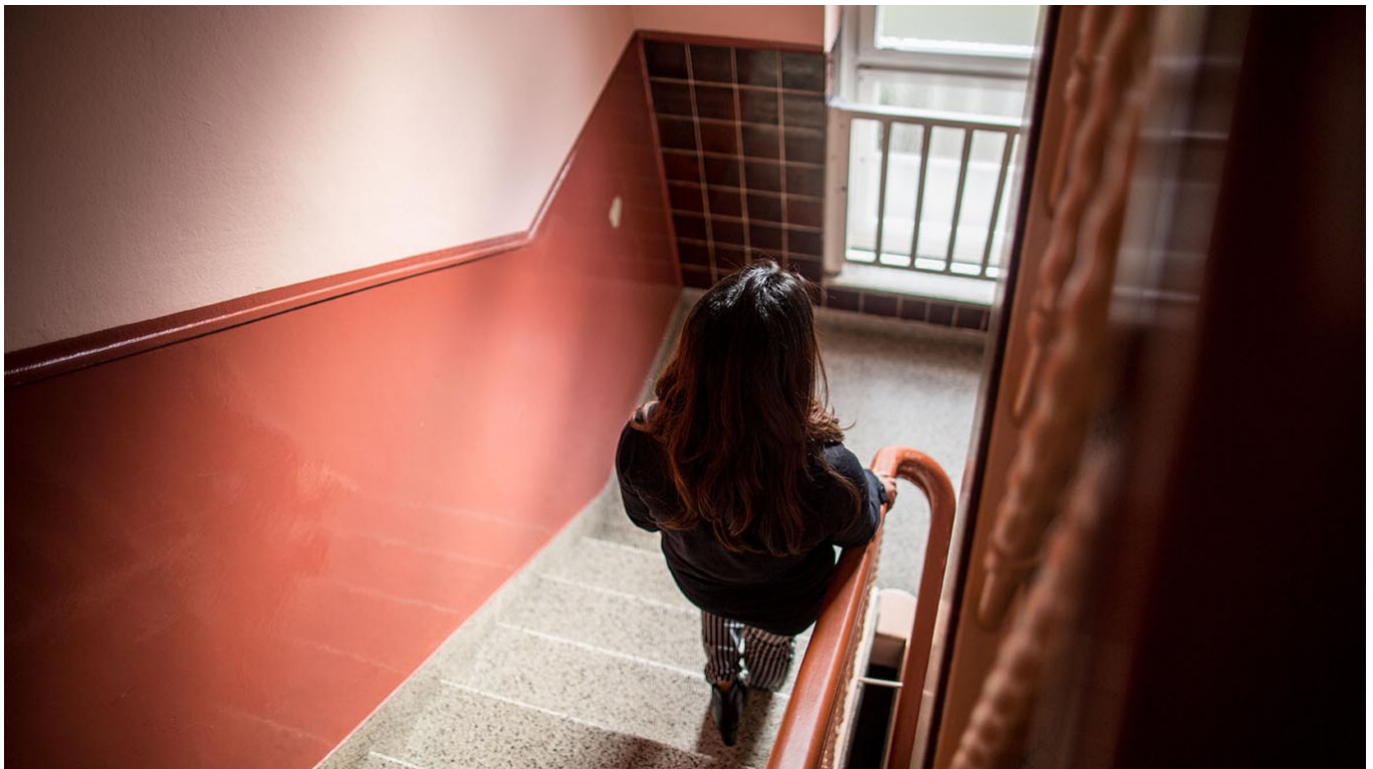


Russia Seeks Protections for Domestic Abuse Victims During Coronavirus Lockdown

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Experts have warned that lockdown measures to slow the spread of Covid-19 would lead to even more abuse in Russia, where domestic violence has been decriminalized since 2017. **Maja Hitij / DPA / TASS**

The authors of Russia's delayed domestic abuse law have asked the government to take emergency steps to protect victims during the coronavirus quarantine, the RBC news website [reported](#) Tuesday.

Experts have [warned](#) that lockdown measures to slow the spread of Covid-19 would lead to even more abuse in Russia, where domestic violence has been decriminalized since 2017.

Related article: [When Your Home Isn't a Safe Space. Russian Women Fear Rise in Domestic Violence as Coronavirus Quarantine Starts.](#)

The proposed measures include providing shelter for victims, exempting them from

punishment for violating quarantine rules and ordering police to respond to all domestic violence reports.

“We need to urgently take these measures now,” RBC quoted the proposal’s co-author Oksana Pushkina as saying.

“Hiding your head in the sand means harming people. Who are we kidding when we don’t acknowledge the issue?” Pushkina said.

Data cited by RBC said that calls to Russia’s domestic violence hotline have increased by at least one-quarter in a month, while other regions saw up to threefold increases. Homelessness due to job loss among women with children has gone up 40%, according to RBC.

As mounting evidence suggests that coronavirus-related restrictions on movement have fueled a rise in domestic abuse worldwide, the United Nations has [called on](#) governments to “put women’s safety first as they respond to the pandemic.”

“We’ll definitely need to treat this pandemic for more than 10 years if we don’t adopt a special law,” Pushkina, who co-authored a bill to re-criminalize domestic abuse that has stalled in Russia’s parliament since it was introduced last fall, was quoted as saying.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova’s office said it would consider the proposals once it receives them, RBC reported.

Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia’s upper-house Federation Council, has [said](#) that lawmakers would consider the legislation to re-criminalize domestic violence as soon as “the circumstances permit.”

“I don’t think there will be a surge in domestic violence since families are going through this difficult time together,” Matviyenko said last Thursday.

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