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Russia Records First Rise in Murder Rate for 20 Years – Kommersant

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The number of murders in Russia last year increased for the first time in 20 years in what some analysts suggest is a knock-on effect of the country's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Russian business daily Kommersant reported Tuesday, citing a bar association report.

The past two decades had seen a steady decline in the number of murder and attempted murder cases from 32,265 in 2002 to 7,332 in 2021, Kommersant said, citing the Travmpunkt bar association.

But 2022 saw a 4% rise to 7,628 cases of murder and attempted murder registered by the Russian Prosecutor General's Office, according to the report.

The data contrasts with a Russian Interior Ministry report last week saying that the number of overall crimes reported in Russia decreased by 1.9% in 2022, while violent crime was down by 4.1%.

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Travmpunkt attributes the increase in homicides, as well as incidents of domestic and police violence, to factors directly and indirectly related to the invasion of Ukraine. These include increased alcohol consumption among the general population and post-traumatic stress disorder among soldiers.

The data also showed a significant rise in murder rates in the Russian regions that border Ukraine, Kommersant reported.

Entitled "Patterns in the Growth of Violence in Countries Involved in Armed Conflicts," Travmpunkt's report was authored by attorneys specializing in protecting the victims of violent crime, according to Kommersant.

However, some lawyers cast doubt on the report's conclusions, saying that only large-scale sociological research could establish a link between Russia's war in Ukraine and Russia's domestic homicide rate.

"If there's an increase in crime, it means there are social prerequisites, but we can't tell what they are right now," lawyer and former investigator Igor Markelov told Kommersant.

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