

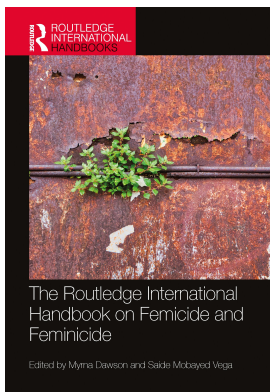
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Publisher: *Routledge*

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The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide

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Femicide in the Russian Federation

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781003202332-25>

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Published online on: 31 May 2023

How to cite :- Ksenia Meshkova, Lyubava Malysheva. 31 May 2023, *Femicide in the Russian Federation from: The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide* Routledge
Accessed on: 26 Dec 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781003202332-25>

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FEMICIDE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ksenia Meshkova and Lyubava Malysheva

Introduction

An article outlining the work of activists fighting domestic violence in the Russian Federation, published by *Time* magazine in March 2021, argues that “an estimated 14,000 women in the country die as a result of domestic violence each year – more than nine times the number of deaths in the U.S., though Russia’s population is less than half the size” (Roache, 2021). This number – 14,000 women dying from domestic violence in Russia yearly – seems to be moving from publication to publication in the past 25 years: it appears not only in journalistic articles, but in reports of the Russian Federation to CEDAW (CEDAW, 1999), studies done by Amnesty International (AI, 2005), and reports by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 1997). But where does this number come from? It seems that it first appears in Russia’s report to CEDAW in 1994. In the absence of official statistics on the matter, it seems that the authors of the CEDAW report took the number of homicides for the year 1993 and divided it by two, assuming that the resulting number represents the number of murdered women and, therefore, the victims of intimate partner femicides (Porotikova, 2016). Even though it is clear today that this methodology is flawed, this number still appears in various publications.

In the absence of reliable official statistics, it is hard to get data that can be trusted. This chapter presents the work of the independent collective Femicid.net and their attempt to create a database of femicide cases based on news reports from the press. The collective uses the following working definition of femicide, which will apply to this chapter: “Femicide is the murder of women on the basis of hatred of women, committed by men or in patriarchal interests with the connivance of the state.” Even though the majority of femicides recorded in the database are intimate partner femicides, stranger femicides are also included into this definition. Following Marcela Lagarde y De Los Ríos (Lagarde y De Los Ríos, 2010) and her understanding of femicide, it is important for the collective to highlight the role of the Russian state’s failure to prevent and react adequately to the crime of femicide.

The chapter will begin with the presentation of the background information on domestic violence and femicide in Russia. The legal situation, data from official statistics and prevalence studies, as well as work of help system for the victim-survivors of domestic violence will be discussed here. In the second part of the chapter, the data collected by the collective Femicid.net will be presented and discussed. We will start by explaining the origin and goals of the collective, then talk about the methodology of data collection, and present the results of the collective’s work so far. Finally, in the outlook, we will present further projects and plans for the collective.

Russian Context

Legal Situation

To this day, the Russian Federation does not have any specific legislation on violence against women, femicide, or domestic violence (Duban, 2020: 35). Multiple attempts to introduce such legislation have been made in the past decades, but so far all have failed. Acts of violence that are committed within the family are prosecuted under the Russian Criminal Code (RCC) and the Russian Code of Administrative Offences (RCAO). The relevant articles in the RCC cover offences against the person, including murder and manslaughter (Articles 105 to 109), bodily harm of various degrees (Articles 111, 112, and 115), “systematic psychological suffering” (Article 117), and threats (Article 119). The punishment for different forms of violence is based on the degree of physical harm victims suffer as a result.

While grievous or medium bodily harm is subject to public prosecution, “minor bodily harm” is prosecuted privately, meaning that the victim must collect evidence, bring charges before a court, and deal with the pursuance of criminal proceedings. Other forms of assault that do not result in bodily harm are treated as “battery” under Article 116. This article was amended several times in 2016 and 2017, and as a result, battery was decriminalised, taken out of RCC and included in the Russian Code of Administrative Offences. According to the current legal situation, all instances of simple battery that occur no more than once a year are classified as administrative offences and punished with fines, 10 to 15 days in jail, or community service. Only instances of aggravated battery or repeated battery are considered criminal offences (HRW, 2018: 33). The act of decriminalisation that was introduced as an attempt to lighten the load of work on courts has fostered a sense of impunity for abusers, weakened protections for victims, and created “new procedural shortcomings” in the prosecution of domestic violence (HRW, 2018: 34). Moreover, the fact that battery within relationships is punished with fines means that such money comes from the family budget and punishes not only the perpetrator but also the victim.

As there are no legal definitions in Russia of femicide or domestic violence or partner violence, they are not recognised as aggravating factors for other offences (Duban, 2020: 28). The complex dynamics of domestic violence cases are not addressed by the existing legal framework – in particular, the circumstances of this type of violence, such as the fact that the victim(s) and perpetrator often share a living space. Moreover, many types of violence (e.g. stalking) are not addressed by the existing legal framework (Duban, 2020: 29).

Even though Russia has not signed the Istanbul Convention, it has ratified several instruments obliging it to strengthen women’s rights and support victims of gender-based violence. Given that Russia is a member of the Council of Europe¹, it must follow the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Furthermore, the European Court of the Human Rights (ECtHR) sees violence against women and domestic violence as forms of discrimination against women (Duban, 2020: 14). Therefore, in cases where the state failed to protect women from violence, Russian women have the right to sue the state². According to the judgement of the ECtHR, Russia’s legal framework does not meet the obligations set by the Convention (ECtHR, 2021), ruling that “the applicants’ cases demonstrated that the authorities had not considered domestic violence as warranting intervention” (ECtHR, 2021: 3) and “the authorities had eschewed instituting criminal proceedings and had ended their enquiries on the basis of hasty or ill-founded conclusions” (ECtHR, 2021: 3). Further, Russia faces obligations to improve the state response to violence against women set by CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration (Duban, 2020).

Domestic Violence and Femicide in Russia: Official Statistics and Data from Prevalence Studies and NGOs

Unfortunately, administrative statistics on both domestic violence and femicide in Russia are scattered and unreliable (Duban, 2020). First, as previously admitted by researchers (e.g. Yumaguzin, 2011; Semenova et al., 2017) and government officials (Ivanova et al., 2013), Russian homicide

statistics do not represent the whole picture of reality. In the overall causes of death statistics published by the Russian Statistical Agency (Rosstat), “external causes of death” are the third most popular category. This category includes homicides, suicides, traffic accidents of various kinds, and so-called events of undetermined intent (e.g. poisonings, accidents caused by firearms, accidental falls). Causes of death are determined by legal and medical experts, and in cases where deaths cannot be declared with certainty as homicide or suicide, other categories for events of undetermined intent are noted as causes of death. According to the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, “the actual number of deaths from homicide among those aged 20–29 exceeds the official statistics by 41.4% for men, and 31.8% among women; the rates in both groups double in the age range of 40–59” (Yumaguzin and Vinnik, 2017: 97). Homicide statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are lower still than the statistics of Rosstat, because “(a) medical examiner is not able to report a homicide to the Ministry if no investigation has been conducted on the case” (Yumaguzin and Vinnik, 2017: 97). Moreover, these homicide statistics exclude involuntary manslaughter (Articles 108, 109, and 111, Part 4 of the Russian Criminal Code) (Yumaguzin and Vinnik, 2017: 97).

Since there is currently no legislation and no legal definition of domestic violence, data on this crime is not gathered systematically. However, Rosstat publishes data on the numbers of violent actions in the family and the numbers of victims of violent actions in the family³. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is named as the source of this data. It is, however, unclear how exactly this data is gathered. The total number of victims of this crime in 2021 was 32,538, of which 22,615 (69.5%) were women. Of these, 13,966 violent actions were committed among spouses; the number of victims that were women was 11,728 (83.98%)⁴.

According to the publication by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in May 2019, violence happens in 25% of all families in Russia, and a third of all murders are committed in families (Valyaev, 2019). The publication claims that the fact that beatings were removed from the Russian Criminal Code and became a part of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences brings a positive change. These crimes are now directly registered by local police officers, who can then work with perpetrators and prevent more serious crimes. Thus, more than 88,000 persons were registered as perpetrators of domestic violence on 1 January 2019 (Valyaev, 2019). The number of beatings in 2018, registered by police officers, was 224,000 (Valyaev, 2019).

Data from prevalence studies suggest that the scope of domestic violence is much higher, however. According to the study conducted by the MSU Women’s Council in 2002, almost 80% of women have experienced some form of psychological violence; 54%, at least one type of economic violence; 23%, some form of sexual violence (including rape and forced sex); 50%, physical violence in their current relationships at least once (Gorshkova and Shurygina, 2003). Only a small percentage of the study’s participants reported searching for help after experiencing partnership violence: 5% reported to a medical professional, 19% submitted a complaint to the police, and 1% accessed a crisis centre (Gorshkova and Shurygina, 2003: 6).

Another representative study assessing the prevalence of marital violence titled “Reproductive health of Russian population in 2011” was conducted by Rosstat with the support of the United Nations. The lifetime prevalence of violence among study participants who were married at least once was as follows: 20% disclosed experiences of physical violence, 38% verbal violence, and 4% sexual violence (Rosstat, 2012: 53). On par with the 2002 study, only a small percentage of women reported seeking help after having experienced marital violence: just 10% of help-seeking women went to the police, 6% to a medical facility, and 2% addressed legal professionals (Rosstat, 2012: 53).

An attempt to ascertain the number of femicides in Russia was made by the Consortium of Women’s Non-Governmental Organizations in 2021. The team of the project, titled Algorithm Sveta, developed an algorithm to analyse court case files available online (Rusova and Graf, 2021). This involved taking all available case files for paragraphs 105 “Murder,” 107 “Murder in affective state,” and 111 “Deliberate infliction of gross bodily harm” of the Criminal Codex from the online archives of Moscow City Court and the state court database called Justice. Available case files were

coded with keywords and cases mentioning domestic violence (e.g. violence from partners, ex-partners, or relatives) were marked (Rusova and Graf, 2021). According to the results of the project, during the period from 2011 to 2019, 65.8% (12,209 out of 18,547) of women killed were victims of domestic violence. The perpetrators were their partners (in 81% of the cases) or relatives (19%) (Rusova and Graf, 2021). These numbers remain stable throughout the years, increasing or decreasing by just 1%. Between 2011 and 2019, 9,868 women were killed by their partners. This is 53% of all analysed cases of murdered women and 12% of all published cases of all homicides (Rusova and Graf, 2021). It should be noted that not all the prosecuted cases are available online; therefore, the numbers do not fully illustrate the reality.

Help System

According to the 2021 WAVE Report, Russia does not meet any of the standards for help systems for victim-survivors of violence set by the Council of Europe and the Istanbul Convention (IC). The report claims there are 12 women-only shelters and 98 shelters altogether, with 448 available beds (WAVE, 2021: 151). That means that 97% of the beds required by the standards of the IC are currently non-existent. There are around 150 women's centres providing support for women in "difficult life situations," including domestic violence. However, as these centres deal with a variety of issues (such as HIV, drug use, and poverty), and only some of them specialise in partner or domestic violence, their help is insufficient and often not particularly beneficial (HRW, 2018).

A study conducted by Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that multiple problems exist with the shelter system (HRW, 2018). For example, the process of getting a place in a state shelter is complicated. For the state shelters, women need to provide a list of documents, including a permanent registration (*propiska*) at the town where the shelter is located. This is problematic for several reasons. First, this registration is normally only possible for those who own the flat they live in, making the shelters inaccessible for immigrants and women currently living in a different town. Since there are few shelters and they are only located in bigger towns, it means that shelters are even more inaccessible for women living in rural regions. Further, it becomes problematic for women wishing to escape their abusers and move to a different town. Second, HRW details cases where women were required to provide a decision of the court or a copy of police reports proving that they are really suffering from domestic violence or to present their case to a commission, which meant waiting several weeks before they could get a place (HRW, 2018). More than 50% of those who try getting a place in a state shelter end up getting rejected (HRW, 2018: 73). Moreover, state shelters often do not have an understanding of what domestic violence is and try to "reunite" the families, which can be lethal for women suffering from violence (HRW, 2018). Even though non-governmental centres and shelters do not have such requirements, they are generally less known to the public and, therefore, less accessible for women searching for protection. In addition, non-governmental centres are dependent on foreign grants and private donations, which makes their situation precarious (HRW, 2018).

Project Femicid.net and Its Femicide Data Collection

Femicid.net (НЕТ ФЕМИЦИДУ, NO TO FEMICIDE) is one of the projects of the Women's Museum in Moscow⁵. To our knowledge, the collective Femicid.net was the first project in Russia specifically dedicated to the issue of femicide. It came to the attention of its founding members that even though other countries had databases on femicide cases (such as the EURES⁶ database in Italy) and movements specifically dealing with the issue of femicide (such as #NiUnaMenos in Latin America), such groups and databases, whether academic or grassroots, did not exist in Russia. In the absence of complete and factual information on femicide and because of the refusal of Russian

authorities to acknowledge it as a problem, such a project was urgently needed. Thus, in 2019, the project began to collect news reports about femicide and publish data in the public domain. To this day, despite various feminist groups regularly raising the issues of women murdered by their intimate partners and of the subsequent inadequate response of Russian authorities, the term “domestic violence” is still used, not “femicide.”

Methodology of the Project

In order to collect news reports on femicide, researchers of the project have created 38 different alerts for femicide-related news. The list of alerts includes phrases such as “killing of a girl,” “killing of a female partner,” “death from home violence,” “senior female murder,” and “killed his female neighbour,” among others. The project includes data from 84 regions of Russia⁷. Every day, the members of the collective check the alerts and read, systematise, and enter around 200 articles into a Google spreadsheet. During the research process, new data is constantly added and updated, including those from previous years.

The categories in the Google spreadsheet include the ages and occupations of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), the victim-perpetrator relationship, the circumstances of the crime, and the course of the investigation and its outcome. The information is checked on the Prosecutor’s Office websites, courts and investigative committees, and news sites usually excluded from the automated results found by search engines. The resulting processed data allows project researchers to gather information about individual cases and to create reports on the overall situation regarding femicide in Russia.

One important methodological limitation is that the news coverage does not span the entire range of femicide cases. Some cases do not make the press at all and are, therefore, missing from the database. Since many cases are reported with anonymity (without revealing the name of either victim or perpetrator), there is also a high probability that some cases may be entered twice. Moreover, some cases get more coverage than others, leading to variations in the information available for each case.

Discussion

Overall Data

In this section, we will present some data collected by the project Femicid.net. We start with the overall number of femicides per year and then move to the particularities of the data on femicide victims – namely, age range, and socio-economic status. Thereafter, we will talk about details of the femicide cases included in the databases, discussing the relationships between the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) and the methods and locations of femicides, as well as data on complex cases. Finally, we will discuss available data on the perpetrators of femicide, including age, socio-economic status, health conditions, and possible motives for the killings, including the sentences received for committing these femicides.

All information presented here is drawn from the media coverage of femicide during the period 2019–2022. Many cases first become available to the public with a delay of one to two years, sometimes even longer. All data presented are as of 12 July 2022.

Overall, the database contains information on 1,766 femicide cases for 2019, including 1,555 intimate femicide cases (murders committed by relatives, intimate partners, and acquaintances). In 2020, there were 1,705 femicide cases in the press, including 1,511 intimate femicides. For 2021, the numbers were 1,408 and 1,214, respectively. For the year 2022, 638 cases of femicide have so far been entered into the database.

Victims of Femicide

The database includes information on the age of murdered women and girls (see Table 21.1). Every year, girls between the ages of 0–6 and 7–18 are murdered by their relatives and partners: no age is safe for Russian females. Most women killed were between 36 and 50 years old (25.54% in 2019, 26.16% in 2020, and 26.78% in 2021). The distribution of age groups is consistent throughout the years.

Table 21.2 presents information on the socio-economic status and occupation of murdered women and girls. Only a few reports contain names and/or pictures of the murdered women, and even fewer describe their occupations and/or life stories. Most femicide victims in Russia remain anonymous, suggesting that their lives appear to have very little value in the eyes of society.

Data on Femicide Cases

In this section, we discuss data related to the cases of femicide cases, beginning with the relationships between the victims and perpetrators of femicides (see Table 21.3). In the largest proportion of cases – over 40% – the victim and the perpetrator had an intimate relationship at the time of the femicide.

Table 21.1 Ages of Murdered Women and Girls

	2019		2020		2021	
0–6	26	1.47%	12	0.7%	11	0.78%
7–18	31	1.76%	49	2.87%	51	3.62%
19–24	65	3.68%	46	2.7%	56	3.98%
25–35	238	13.48%	239	14.02%	168	11.93%
36–50	451	25.54%	446	26.16%	377	26.78%
51–70	349	19.76%	361	21.17%	285	20.24%
71–100	176	9.97%	189	11.09%	135	9.59%
Unknown	430	24.35%	363	21.29%	325	23.08%
Overall	1,766	100.00%	1,705	100.00%	1,408	100.00%

Table 21.2 Socio-Economic Status and Occupation of Murdered Women

	2019		2020		2021	
Unknown	1,226	69.42%	1,168	68.50%	990	70.31%
Aged 60+/Retired	374	21.18%	395	23.17%	279	19.82%
Other	73	4.13%	60	3.52%	55	3.91%
Salesperson	16	0.91%	9	0.53%	12	0.85%
School girl	15	0.85%	28	1.64%	28	1.99%
Unemployed	12	0.68%	10	0.59%	10	0.71%
Business woman	12	0.68%	5	0.29%	4	0.28%
Sex worker/prostitute	11	0.62%	10	0.59%	4	0.28%
Homeless	8	0.45%	7	0.41%	8	0.57%
Student	7	0.40%	4	0.23%	12	0.85%
Medical professional	6	0.34%	8	0.47%	4	0.28%
Waitress	4	0.23%	1	0.06%		
Human rights defender	1	0.06%			1	0.07%
Taxi driver	1	0.06%			1	0.07%
Overall	1,766	100.00%	1,705	100.00%	1,408	100.00%

Table 21.3 Relationship Between Victim and Perpetrator

	2019		2020		2021	
Intimate partner	722	40.88%	719	42.17%	584	41.48%
Acquaintance	425	24.07%	426	24.99%	313	22.23%
Son	179	10.14%	177	10.38%	140	9.94%
Unknown	144	8.15%	148	8.68%	123	8.74%
Former intimate partner	84	4.76%	67	3.93%	77	5.47%
Criminal	81	4.59%	46	2.70%	70	4.97%
Close relative	66	3.74%	61	3.58%	55	3.91%
Grandson	30	1.70%	37	2.17%	19	1.35%
Distant relative	22	1.25%	19	1.11%	18	1.28%
Former relative	12	0.68%	5	0.29%	8	0.57%
Police officer	1	0.06%			1	0.07%
Overall	1,766	100.00%	1,705	100.00%	1,408	100.00%

Table 21.4 Most Common Femicide Methods

	2019		2020		2021	
Beaten	632	35.79%	625	36.66%	467	33.17%
Stabbed	611	34.6%	594	34.84%	475	33.74%
Strangled	183	10.36%	150	8.8%	135	9.59%
Unknown	83	4.7%	89	5.22%	83	5.89%
Fire	80	4.53%	83	4.87%	75	5.33%
Shot	52	2.94%	48	2.82%	61	4.33%
Axed	39	2.21%	39	2.29%	38	2.7%
Dismembered	35	1.98%	24	1.41%	32	2.27%
Throw off a height	24	1.36%	18	1.06%	20	1.42%
Drowned	10	0.57%	13	0.76%	3	0.21%
Overall	1,766	99.04%	1,705	98.71%	1,408	98.65%

Together with former partners (4.76% of cases in 2019, 3.93% of cases in 2020, and 5.47% of cases in 2021), this group is the largest and consistent with international tendencies (UNODC, 2021).

The second largest category of femicides involved acquaintances (24.07% of cases in 2019, 24.99% of cases in 2020, and 22.23% of cases in 2021), although it cannot be ruled out that they were intimate partners or relatives of the women they murdered. The same can be said about the category of unknown relationships between victims and perpetrators (8.15% of cases in 2019, 8.68% of cases in 2020, and 8.74% of cases in 2021). Frequently, cases from these two categories are moved into other categories as soon as relationship data appears in the press.

Another large category is relatives of different kinds. For example, sons (around 10% of cases in 2019 to 2021), close (3.5 to 4% of cases) and distant (just above 1% of the cases) relatives, and former relatives⁸ (less than 1% of cases) were included in the larger category of intimate femicides.

Table 21.4 presents the most common methods of femicide. The majority of women murdered as a result of femicide were beaten to death (35.79% in 2019, 36.66% in 2020, and 33.17% in 2021) or stabbed (34.6% in 2019, 34.84% in 2020, and 33.74% in 2021). The third most common method of killing was by strangulation, which happened in 10.36% of cases in 2019, 8.8% of cases in 2020, and 9.59% of cases in 2021. To summarise, the three most prevalent methods of killing do not involve the use of weapons, including those easily accessed at home (such as kitchen knives). Since it is not common in Russia to own firearms, only a small percentage of women were shot (2.94% in 2019, 2.82% in 2020, and 4.33% in 2021).

The most popular locations for femicides were in the homes: at the top of the list was the category of “shared housing of victim and perpetrator” (34.71% of all cases in 2019, 45.45% in 2020, and 34.71% in 2021). The latter is consistent with the fact that the majority of perpetrators were the intimate partners of the victims. Shared housing was closely followed by the victim’s housing (20.72% of cases in 2019, 18.3% in 2020, and 20.72% in 2021) and the perpetrator’s housing (5.32% of cases in 2019, 5.04% in 2020, and 5.32% in 2021). A small percentage of women were also killed at third-party housing (for example, while visiting another home), which happened in 2.55% of all cases in 2019, 2.23% of cases in 2020, and 2.55% of cases in 2021.

The second largest category was in the public space: 4.76% of femicides in 2019, 5.69% in 2020, and 4.76% in 2021 were committed on the streets. Two other places in this category were embankments (1–1.5% in years 2019 to 2021) and woodland areas (1.35–1.36% of cases in 2019 to 2021). Finally, a small proportion of the cases were committed in workplaces (victim’s, perpetrator’s, or shared) or in vehicles (perpetrator’s, victim’s, or shared).

Some cases were more complex than others. For example, in some of them, there were multiple victims where other people were also either injured or killed. There were 201 such cases (11.38% of the total) in 2019, 198 in 2020 (11.61% of the total), and 192 in 2021 (13.64% of the total). Moreover, in some cases there were multiple perpetrators. The number of such cases was 54 in 2019 (3.06% of all cases), 37 in 2020 (2.17% of all cases), and 37 in 2021 (2.63% of all cases). According to the news reports, rape was a part of femicide in 54 (3.06% of all cases) in 2019, 36 (2.11%) cases in 2020, and 41 (2.91%) cases in 2021.

The data analysed by the project contain few murders of lesbian/bisexual women and only one murder of women on the basis of racism⁹. However, for both homophobia and racism, it is possible that the motives of these crimes were not identified by the police, courts, and the media. As such, the data do not allow for conclusions concerning homophobic or racist motives for completed femicide in contemporary Russia.

Data on Perpetrators

The majority of femicide perpetrators (33.69% in 2019, 33.14% in 2020, and 34.09% in 2021), whose ages were known to the project Femicid.net, were between 36 and 50 years old. The second largest age group of perpetrators was between the ages of 25 and 35 (24.35% in 2019, 22.76% in 2020, and 18.89% in 2021). Even young boys (aged 7 to 18) were perpetrators of femicide: 21 (1.19% of total) femicides were committed by boys in 2019, 23 (1.35%) of femicides in 2020, and 23 (1.63%) in 2021.

The reports on femicides often included information on perpetrators’ mental health, including addictions, and possible motives for the killings. The most common type of information was perpetrators’ alcoholism, mentioned in 47.62% of cases in 2019, 47.57% of cases in 2020, and 45.45% of cases in 2021. Even though it is known that alcoholism and binge drinking is a problem among men in Russia (Leon et al., 2009), the connection between drinking and femicides should be made with caution to avoid absolving perpetrators of their actions. The most common motive of the killings, as identified by the press, was jealousy (9.12% of cases in 2019, 9.09% of cases in 2020, and 9.87% of cases in 2021).

With respect to convictions for femicide, it is known that 44.39% of perpetrators in 2019, 41.29% in 2020, and 30.18% in 2021 were convicted. The majority of perpetrators (19.03% of all femicides in 2019, 17.44% in 2020, and 14.65% in 2021) were imprisoned for a time period between 97 and 144 months (or between 8 and 12 years), but a large percentage of perpetrators received lower sentences. The sentences for other types of crimes were often higher than for femicide. For example, a new law that prohibits “the discreditation of the Russian military,” and spreading “deliberately fake information” about the war in Ukraine (e.g. calling it a war) is punishable by imprisonment for up to

15 years. The first known case of such punishment is that of Alexei Gorinov, a deputy at Moscow's Krasnoselsky district council, who spoke out against the war at the work meeting and was sentenced to seven years in prison¹⁰. Hundreds of other Russian citizens who were critical about the war have received substantial fines and are awaiting prison sentences. With regard to this, prison sentences for femicide do not reflect the gravity of the crime and contribute to the idea that women are second-class citizens.

Characteristics of Russian Femicides

From the data discussed, we can draw a picture of common trends of femicide in Russia. In the majority of cases, women between 25 and 70 years are beaten or stabbed to death by their intimate partners (who are also between the same age range and are likely to have an alcohol addiction) in their shared home. As presented at the beginning of the chapter, victims of domestic violence have very few chances to escape from violence since few shelter places are available and there are no protection orders or laws guaranteeing women and girls' safety from male violence. It is often commonplace that women live with their abusers for years simply because they have nowhere to go and no money to find alternative housing. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that many of the femicides discussed could have been avoided if the Russian state were to put more effort into prevention and placed more value on the lives of Russian women.

Outlook

All the data from the femicide database is available on the website Femicid.net, together with further data and analyses, such as calculations of CNF (coefficient of femicide reported in the news) and CNFi (coefficient of intimate femicide reported in the news)¹¹. Besides collecting and analysing data, the collective has several other projects ongoing. For example, based on the analysis of the first news on femicide, members of the collective have developed guidelines for journalists on ethical femicide reporting¹². Another project is a photo memorial of femicide victims in Russia, based on the photos of those women whose murders were published in the press¹³. Members of the collective studied the influence of media on the femicides, analysing the ways such news articles are presented by the Investigative Committee and by the press, and were in contact with government officials, explaining the importance of ethical reporting of femicides.

Since Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, members of the collective began to analyse the influence of this invasion on femicide in Russia. Another ongoing project is the analysis of other types of violence against women in Russia, including rape, attempted murder, and torture.

Notes

- 1 Following the Russia's attack on Ukraine in February 2022, Russia was expelled from the Council of Europe. Evaluations of the Russian help and legal systems made by the COE and ECtHR, whilst not legally binding, are useful in order to assess the quality of their provision for victims of violence.
- 2 E.g. *Volodina v. Russia* (Application no. 41261/17, judgement of 9 July 2019) or *Tunikova and others v. Russia* (applications 55974/16, 53118/17, 27484/18, and 28011/19, judgement of 14.12.2021).
- 3 Data from Table 7.26, "Number of victims of crimes, connected to violent actions, committed against a family member (in Russian Federation)," prepared by Vera Volkova in May 2022, Rosstat Folder "Family, Motherhood and Childhood," <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13807>, accessed on 29 June 2022.
- 4 Data from Table 7.26, "Number of victims of crimes, connected to violent actions, committed against a family member (in Russian Federation)," prepared by Vera Volkova in May 2022, Rosstat Folder "Family, Motherhood and Childhood," <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13807>, accessed on 29 June 2022.
- 5 Information about the museum can be found here: www.wmmsk.com/about-museum.
- 6 The database is accessible here: www.eures.it/tag/femminicidio.

- 7 It was decided to exclude two territories from the analysis: Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. They were annexed by Russia in 2014. This territory is still regarded as occupied territory of the Ukraine.
- 8 E.g. former sons-in-law.
- 9 Murder of Umida Egamurotova: “Massacre of a female cashier in Uzlovaya: he hated her, because she was not Russian,” <https://migranty.org/novosti/rasprava-nad-zhenshinoj-kassirov-v-uzlo>, accessed on 26 July 2022.
- 10 Harding, L. (2022): Moscow councillor jailed for seven years after criticising Ukraine war, www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/08/moscow-councillor-jailed-seven-years-criticising-ukraine-war-alexei-gorinov, accessed on 19 July 2022.
- 11 The database can be accessed here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qe-1QNELEwwtdrgWG9Zf_LCAGPDF8TMRg5S_VeeYYcY/edit#gid=600832592.
- 12 Bachrenkova, E., Malysheva, L. (2019): *How to write about femicide: recommendations for the media*, www.wmmk.com/2019/07/kak-pisat-pro-femicid-rekomendacii-dlya-media, accessed on 21 July 2022.
- 13 Victims of Femicide in Russia: A Memorial, www.wmmk.com/2019/09/memorial/, accessed on 21 July 2022.

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