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РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ПРИ ОТДЕЛЕНИИ ООН И ДРУГИХ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯХ
В ЖЕНЕВЕ

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The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the request of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences G/SO 214 (89-9), has the honour to forward herewith the information of the Russian Federation.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner the assurances of its highest consideration



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(Translated from Russian)

Replies to the questionnaire on the elimination of violence against women

1. Is your Government instituting programmes, policies or other measures to prevent violence against women in the family and community?

In the Russian Federation, violence against women is regarded as a violation of human rights that requires State intervention. Violence against women is a criminal offence. The problem has been brought to the attention of the authorities, the public and the mass media, since there is a growing realization that the scale of violence against women threatens the national interest. Measures are being taken around the country to raise public awareness of the problem.

Prevention of violence against women is a priority action in the National Plan for the Advancement of Women and the Enhancement of their Role in Society in the period 2001-2005, which also seeks to prevent domestic violence. Protection is afforded to victims in the form of domestic violence crisis and help centres; medical and psychological counselling; initiatives to prevent domestic violence; and stiffening of criminal penalties for violence against women.

In 2004 the Russian Federation devised a Gender Strategy reflecting the principal themes of national policy on women. Among other things, the Strategy aims to tackle the problem of violence against women. The Strategy makes provision for education campaigns on this issue, with a view to raising public awareness and drawing greater attention to efforts to combat this evil.

2. Is your Government instituting programmes, policies or other measures to protect and provide services to women who have been subjected to violence by private actors?

The Government of the Russian Federation is making systematic and targeted efforts to make law enforcement officers, medical staff and social workers more aware of and sympathetic to the problem of violence against women, which has resulted in more domestic crimes being brought to light.

Domestic violence is often hidden. In some cases, victims of violence in the home prefer to seek help from the relevant social services rather than the militia. Therefore, in order to ascertain the true facts about violence against women, statistics disaggregated by gender and age have been kept since 2004 on the number of persons seeking assistance from social services dealing with family and child welfare, including in connection with sexual assaults.

The Federal Act of 1995 outlining the principles on which social services operate in the Russian Federation establishes the legal basis of the work of social services and organizes a system of institutions providing relevant social welfare, legal, medical and educational services to families, children and women. On this legal basis, a network of social service institutions is developing in the Russian Federation; such institutions are intended, inter alia, to provide various kinds of assistance to citizens living in difficult personal circumstances and to help resolve various family-related and psychological problems.

At the start of 2005, the social welfare system comprised 3,315 social services institutions for families and children. This network is constantly expanding. Social service institutions operate in all regions of the Russian Federation. The most extensive development has been observed among structures such as regional family and child welfare centres, which are front-line multipurpose institutions offering a full range of social services. Social services for families and children are responsible for providing assistance to victims of violence and abuse and people living in difficult circumstances. In 2004 these institutions assisted more than 9.5 million people, including women and children.

Social welfare agencies in the Russian Federation also operate 23 crisis centres for women and 97 crisis units affiliated to social services institutions. Another centre of this type will shortly be opened in Moscow. Crisis centres offer women and girls in difficult

circumstances or battered women and girls free psychological, legal, medical and educational services, in addition to various social and welfare services. In 2004 these centres helped more than 52,000 women and children. In addition, emergency shelters are being established for sexually abused or exploited girls.

Victims of violence can get help in State institutions and in bodies set up by women's non-governmental organizations. There are currently 50 such crisis centres for women. They work closely with regional authorities and local self-government bodies.

In many regions of the Russian Federation there are grass-roots movements and organizations that protect women against all forms and manifestations of violence, and local statutes are being drafted to prevent violence against women and children. More than 300 telephone helplines have been inaugurated that provide urgent psychological help and support and counselling by qualified psychologists, lawyers and other specialists.

3. Is your Government taking measures to prosecute and punish violence against women occurring in the family and community?

The Russian Federation keeps statistics on violent crimes against various categories of victims. In 2004 there were 196,364 recorded offences involving violence against women, including 11,612 sex crimes. These included 30 murders involving rape or sexual violence falling under article 105, paragraph 2 (j) of the Russian Criminal Code; 6,980 rapes (Criminal Code, art. 131); 3,521 sexual assaults (Criminal Code, art. 132); 57 cases of coercion to perform sex acts (Criminal Code, art. 133); and 125 cases of enticement into prostitution (Criminal Code, art. 240).

The internal affairs agencies identify individuals who commit domestic violence, chronic alcoholics, and mentally ill persons who pose an immediate threat to those around them.

Special units to deal with offences against public morality have been established in 12 states of the Russian Federation with a view to preventing and controlling prostitution.

In recent years the Russian Federation has taken additional steps, primarily in the legislative sphere, to prevent domestic violence and assist the victims of domestic violence.

The provisions of the Russian Criminal Code designed to protect the rights of women and children against all forms of violence have been reviewed. Various terms of punishment have been established for sexual assaults, offences against sexual freedom, rape and other sex crimes. Stiffer penalties have been prescribed for premeditated crimes against a person's life, health or sexual inviolability, irrespective of where the crime is committed or whether the perpetrator and the victim are related; and for murder, specifically of a person known to be in a helpless state or a person suffering from a mental or other disorder that deprives them of the capacity to understand what is happening, etc.

It is a crime to drive a person to commit suicide, intentionally to cause injury to health, to commit battery, cruelty, or to cause physical or mental suffering. For the first time cruelty has been interpreted as a special means of causing a victim not only physical but also mental suffering.
