Dessa Shapiro

12/3/19

Period 6 English

The Right to protection by law

“[He pushed me, I fell on the floor and he kicked me in the stomach. He said it was his dream to meet a pure girl, and that I was a disappointment, not pure. . . I started believing that I was no good, lost a lot of weight, my self-esteem was gone” (—Liza, a 33-year-old kindergarten teacher from Pskov)](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence)

Women all over Russia are suffering from Domestic violence; they feel unheard and unsafe in their homes. Imagine coming home to your husband beating you, telling you you're worthless. Women in Russia suffer from violence daily. Much like Liza they feel helpless and can feel it’s their fault, and they're the ones doing something wrong. This violence can affect women physically, causing lifelong health problems and scars. It can also have an emotional impact, causing depression and low self-esteem. Domestic abuse in Russia violates article 8 of the human rights act and does not give equal protection from the law.

The Domestic violence issue in Russia violates human rights, article 8. This right states [“Your Human Rights Are Protected by Law. We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.”](https://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/articles-16-30.html) This right can be broken into a more simple form by saying that this right allows everyone to receive equal access and protection from the law when they are being treated unfairly. This right has been violated many times throughout the world. Many countries don’t have the necessary laws or resources to equity protect everyone. One of the most pressing issues that violates article 8 is domestic violence in Russia. Through 2017 till today more Russian women have been telling their stories. They have been abused by their partners and had little to no access to law enforcement or other help. [“He stuck a knife under my fingernails, hit me over the head with a wooden stool, beat me with a belt...... “They will not do anything to me.” He was right. The police arrived, and the policeman said to me, “What’s the problem? He seems like a normal young man. If you’re bothered about the key, just change the locks.”(Liza, a 33-year-old kindergarten teacher from Pskov)](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence) This story is just one example of how domestic violence is not treated as a problem in Russia. The results of a report done in 2017 stated that 20% of Russian women that have lifelong partners have been abused by their partners. And [one woman dies every 40 minutes as a result of domestic abuse](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/domestic-violence-is-never-ok-so-why-did-russia-just-decriminalize-it/). Reports in Russia state that [“police often treat victims of domestic violence with open hostility and refuse to register or investigate their complaints of domestic violence.”](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence) The victims are also frequently told that they must gather evidence of the assault. Women [must also have all the funds to fight for their case before they are allowed to bring it to the authorities](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence). Trying to gather evidence and the coast it bears, can be stressful and difficult, so some women decide to forgo the process. [“Reports found that 60-70 percent of women who domestic abuse do not report it or seek help, and only around 3 percent of domestic violence cases make it to court.”](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence) This also gives an unfair advantage to someone who has money compared to those who don’t. Therefore not giving everyone equal access to the law.

Russia has [one of the world's highest amounts of domestic abuse deaths and they suffer more severe injuries than other countries](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence). The higher rates of domestic abuse reported in Russia have to do with Russia’s connection to the orthodox church. The orthodox church is one of the three main Christian groups and around 200 million people follow it. [90 million people follow the Russian Orthodox](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church) church and an estimated [63%](https://international.la-croix.com/news/young-russians-less-likely-to-call-themselves-orthodox/10695#) of Russians follow it. The orthodox church has very strong beliefs about gender and their different places in society. The orthodox beliefs state that men and women should be treated equally, but it also doesn't include women in powerful positions. The women mostly stay at home and are shown as housewives. Orthodox churches throughout Russia have pushed the idea that men are more intelligent and overall superior to women. [A top official in the Russian Orthodox Church has sparked anger for saying, men are more intelligent than women and clever females are “rare”](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russian-orthodox-church). Many men through Russia can be influenced by these statements, causing them to believe it be alright to abuse your wife. They can think they are better, more powerful and have the authority to do whatever they want. This is also happening because there is [not easy access to information in Russia and many people are ill-informed](https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence). A lot of women that suffer from domestic abuse might not know it's not a normal and illegal thing to do. If a woman has been with a partner for a long time, when their partner starts to hit and abuse them, they forgive them.

People all over Russia are standing up to unfair laws and demanding there be a change in their country. Women who've suffered from domestic violence are coming out and sharing their stories. These stories are motivating people all over the country to protest and demand new legislation and restrain abusers. Before 2017 there were Russia laws that related to assault, but none of them directly corresponded to domestic abuse. In 2017, the president of Russia Vladimir Putin passed a law that stated [if you batter your wife- but not severe enough to hospitalize them, and it’s your first offense, you no longer get 2 years in jail (as previously stated in the assault law) now you get up to 500 dollars in fines or up to 15 days in jail](https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/23/russia-bill-decriminalize-domestic-violence). This law started more outrage in protesters and more gathered to fight this new law. The protesters made a statement that said that this new law should be changed because it supports abusers and gives them more freedom and lets them get away with more violence. Although the number of protesters has been increasing and awareness is spreading the Russia government is neglecting the problem and has yet to make a statement about any new laws being made or the previous law getting revoked.

If more people can understand how to empathize with the suffering women in Russia, we will be able to make a positive change. In class during the kindness project we learned that Kindness is more than an idea, it can release chemicals into your brain such as dopamine and serotonin in your brain. Kindness has also been proven to show a ripple effect if someone witnesses an act of kindness they are more likely to perform them yourself. I learned that there are two main types of kindness the first type is altruistic kindness and this is when two people are being kind to each other for no gain. Strategic kindness is when one person is using kindness to gain something from another. In many domestic abuse cases in Russia, the abuser is using strategic kindness to manipulate their partner into not leaving them. I think to fix this problem in Russia we should focus on the abusers. Psychologically if someone has been hurt in the past they are more likely to hurt others to feel better about themselves or self-medicate. Doing random acts of kindness can help you feel better about yourself and make others feel better. [Studies have shown that kindness fuels energy and esteem](https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/science-says-random-acts-of-kindness-week-has-astonishing-health-benefits.html?cid=search). Most people assault others because they are unhappy with themselves, so if kindness makes them feel better they are less likely to do so. There is a method called morphic resonance made by Rupert Sheldrake(a British biologist). He defines this theory as["the idea of mysterious telepathy-type interconnections between organisms and of collective memories within species."](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/ruperts-resonance/) and uses examples such as how a dog knows when their owner is coming home. I feel this method could also work for kindness because as kindness and understanding towards Russia builds, the Russian people could be moved into the kindness that’s bordering them. Overall no matter what method we use kindness is a powerful force that can cause a great amount of change.

Bibliography:

Russia Bill to Decriminalize Domestic Violence. (2017, January 23). Retrieved December 18, 2019, from Human Rights Watch website: https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/23/russia-bill-decriminalize-domestic-violence#

‌“I Could Kill You and No One Would Stop Me” | Weak State Response to Domestic Violence in Russia. (2018, October 25). Retrieved December 18, 2019, from Human Rights Watch website: https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/25/i-could-kill-you-and-no-one-would-stop-me/weak-state-response-domestic-violence

‌

Russian Orthodox Church - latest news, breaking stories and comment - The Independent. (2019). *The Independent*. Retrieved from https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russian-orthodox-church?CMP=ILC-refresh

‌Russian Orthodox Church | History & Facts | Britannica. (2019). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church

‌Stéphanie Thomson. (2017, February 8). Domestic violence is never OK. So why did Russia just decriminalize it? Retrieved December 18, 2019, from World Economic Forum website: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/domestic-violence-is-never-ok-so-why-did-russia-just-decriminalize-it/

‌Shermer, M. (2005). Rupert’s Resonance. *Scientific American*, *293*(5), 38–38. https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican1105-38

‌Economy, P. (2018, November 14). Surprising New Research Reveals That the ’Warm Glow’ of Kindness Is Very Real. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from Inc.com website: https://www.inc.com/peter-economy/surprising-new-study-confirms-warm-glow-of-kindness-is-real.html

‌Articles 16-30, United Nations Declaration of Human Rights : Youth For Human Rights Video. (2019). Retrieved December 18, 2019, from Youth for Human Rights website: https://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/articles-16-30.html

‌Mautz, S. (2017, February 13). Science Says “Random Acts of Kindness” Week Has Astonishing Health Benefits. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from Inc.com website: https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/science-says-random-acts-of-kindness-week-has-astonishing-health-benefits.html?cid=search

‌