

President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin
Kremlin, Moscow,
Russian Federation

Dear President Putin,

Authorities in Russia are failing to protect women from violence by state agents like the police. Amnesty International receives regular reports revealing ill-treatment and torture, including rape and other sexual abuse of women, in police stations and prisons. The failure of the authorities to ensure that women in custody are attended by female staff and that a lawyer be present during interrogation facilitates these abuses.

Many women who have suffered these kinds of abuses have not sought redress due to fear about further involvement with the authorities. Being the victim of a sexual crime can also carry social stigma for the women involved. Women who do pursue justice are confronted by a system that largely ignores violence against women and protects perpetrators. Thus, state officials believe that they can continue to abuse women in their charge without risking punishment.

The Russian Federation also fails to protect women from domestic violence. Men who beat or rape their wives are unlikely to face prosecution, since Russian law does not recognize domestic violence as a distinct crime. The authorities acknowledge that domestic violence is prevalent, citing figures of 14,000 women killed every year by their husbands or relatives. Yet authorities have done little to address the problem. Nearly 50 versions of a national law to address domestic violence have failed to make any progress in parliament. Please:

- Ensure that all allegations of human rights abuses are investigated thoroughly and impartially and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.
- Take steps to make domestic violence a distinct criminal offence, and to ensure that law enforcement officials are trained to recognize and prosecute violence against women, including domestic violence.

Sincerely,