

in which the victim was a current or former spouse, common-law partner or dating partner of the perpetrator – between 2003 and 2013. Of those, 747 of the victims were women, and the largest demographic group was women in their twenties. But that data, provided by coroners' offices or police reports, aren't enough for domestic-violence researcher sand advocates who want to prevent similar crimes in the future. For that in-depth in sight, they rely on domestic violence death review committees (DVDRC), a system that is picking up steam across the country, but is still patchy and in consistent in its evidence-gathering. A DVDRC is a multi disciplinary group – some combination of law enforcement, Indigenous advisers, community workers, academics and policy planners – convened by a provincial government to examine the killing of intimate partners or family members. So far there are DVDRCs in six provinces: Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia. A new committee is being launched in Quebec, and there has been movement on a regional committee in Atlantic Canada. The purpose of the committees is to study some or all of the intimate partner murders in their jurisdictions, detect patterns, flaws or missed opportunities, and make recommendations.

“DVDRCs are the one mechanism now in place, in jurisdictions that have them, that put a comprehensive eye on system response sand see how we can do things better in the future,” says Myrna Dawson, director of the Centre for Social and Legal Responses to Violence at the University of Guelph. Dr. Dawson and Peter Jaffe of Western University are partners in the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative, a multidisciplinary project to gather better data for homicide prevention, especially among groups who face a higher risk of violence, such as children, Indigenous women, immigrant and refugee groups, and women in remote and rural communities.

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### **COUNTER-VIOLENCE (EXPERIENCE OF BELGIUM)**

The issues of the importance of international experience for the development of national regulatory legal base to counter domestic violence and giving assistance to victims were considered by such domestic scholars as O.M. Bandurka, A.B. Blaga, A.O. Galai, V.O. Galai, L.O. Golovko, M.O. Kachyns'ka, K. B. Levchenko, V. V. Muranova, S. O. Pronevyh, etc.

However, in the indicated perspective, this problem demands further consideration. The original provisions of the international standards for combating domestic violence are based on a deep awareness of the inadmissibility of such violence which is a gross violation of human rights. We consider it appropriate to include the United Nations Model Law on Domestic Violence, adopted by the United Nations Commission on 2 February 1996 as the most important international legal instrument.

As the United Nations Special Speaker on Violence against Women Radhika Kumaraswamy noted, the purpose of this typical legislation is to act as an editorial guide for legislatures and organizations seeking to lobby their legislative powers on comprehensive domestic violence legislation. The Model Law defines the concept of domestic violence and formulates requirements for law enforcement officers, prosecutors and courts, emphasizes the importance of the safety of victims during criminal and civil proceedings.

Belgian law views domestic violence as a criminal offense. Domestic violence is considered in the Art. 442 of the Criminal Code and is regarded as persecution. Domestic violence is now viewed as an aggravating circumstance leading to more severe sentences. This norm is applied to married and unmarried couples and any other person who maintains or maintained long-term emotional and sexual relations with the victim. Victims have been receiving police assistance since 1997, and since 2003 judges have been able to impose restrictive orders, as a result the system of victim's support have been strengthened by new measures. In May 2001, the first Belgian National Action Plan on Violence which embraces domestic violence and other spheres of violence was adopted. The Domestic Violence Action Plan was worked out in 2004-2007.

It is aimed at focusing efforts to combat partners' violence (former ones). The main legal instrument aimed at combating domestic violence in Bulgaria is the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence adopted in 2005 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. The document regulates the rights of victims from domestic violence, defines protection measures and procedures for their protection.

The analyzed experience of legal combating domestic violence and domestic violence in Belgium and the provisions of the UN Model Law on Combating Violence can serve as a serious legal basis for the improvement of domestic law and law enforcement practice.

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