

CRIMINOLOGICAL AND FORENSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRIME MURDER COMMITTED AS A RESULT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to attempt an assessment of the prevalence and to trace the dynamics of homicides committed as a result of domestic violence in the Republic of Bulgaria. A definition is given for conventional crime and murder, committed by household motives. The legal regulations in the Republic of Bulgaria regarding murders committed as a result of domestic violence are examined. A five-year statistical analysis of the murders committed as a result of domestic violence and the restraining orders issued under the Domestic Violence Protection Act was made. At the end of present paper, the criminological and forensic aspects of the crime in question, which the competent investigating authorities must be aware of, are discussed.

Keywords: criminology, forensic, prevention, domestic violence, homicide, murder, police education

Introduction

Domestic violence is one of the most serious and widespread human rights violations, affecting not only the personal safety and security of victims¹, but also obstructing their personal and social development.

Given the multifaceted nature of its consequences and the high price that society pays as a result of domestic violence, this phenomenon should be perceived not as an individual, but as a significant social problem.

The study of the processes and phenomena in the main constituent cell of society - the family, builds up perceptions of the modern image of mankind. The

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¹ In many situations, domestic violence experts prefer to use the term "survivor of violence" to describe a person who has experienced violence. In the field of law enforcement, however, the term "victim" is regularly used to describe the affected side (regardless of whether she has experienced violence or not).

family is a factor for socialization and social inclusion, but it is also a source of risks for its members and a territory for interpersonal conflicts².

According to the European Unit Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), one in three women (61 million out of a total of 185 million) in the EU has been a victim of physical or sexual violence, or both, after the age of 15. According to researches by non-governmental organizations with a field of application in the area of domestic violence, every fourth woman in Republic of Bulgaria has been a victim of an act of such violence³.

1. Legislation and nature of domestic violence

Modern international legislation on domestic violence either regulates the protection of individuals against violent behavior in general (ICCS, 2015), or specifically defines the rights and obligations of states and citizens regarding the recognition, counteraction and sanctioning of domestic violence (UNDOC, 2015).

In Bulgaria in 2005 a special law was voted and adopted, regulating the problem under consideration - the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (LPDV). The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence defines in Art. 3, letter „b“ the term „domestic violence“, which is similar to that in the LPDV, but in Bulgarian law the circle of persons who can seek protection is more clearly defined. According to the LPDV, domestic violence includes „any act of physical, sexual, mental, emotional or economic violence, as well as the attempt to commit such violence, the forced restriction of privacy, personal liberty and personal rights committed against persons who are related to each other, who are or have been in a family relationship or de facto cohabitation.“ In practice, however, there is almost always an intertwining of domestic violence forms, so often several types of domestic violence are committed with a single act or omission.

The current Penal Code does not contain acts of domestic violence as specific crimes. Although some of its forms are fully comprehended (physical violence or rape) or partially (female genital mutilation as a bodily injury), they do not constitute specific crimes within a family or domestic context, but crimes of a general nature. With the latest amendments to the Penal Code, the legislator introduces a new qualifying circumstance - „the crime was committed in the context of domestic violence“ and based on the accumulated two and a half years of case law practice to adequately comment on the results and subsequent steps to change the legal framework defining the problem.

According to the current norms of the Penal Code, when a crime is committed, apart from the fact that there is no obstacle for the victim of an act of

² Pushkarova, I., Criminogenic risk factors in children and case law as a tool for their management, Bulletin of the SAA (February 2010).

³ See <https://alpharesearch.bg/post/843-seksualnoto-nasilie-nad-jeni-v-bulgaria.html>



domestic violence to receive protection under the LPDV, the current national legislation does not exclude civil, administrative and criminal liability of the perpetrator. At the same time, the proceedings under the LPDV offer the victim a specific set of measures for adequate protection and speed, aimed at stopping acts of domestic violence and preventing subsequent crimes related to it, which are not available in criminal proceedings.

A specific feature is that in addition to a directly injured by a specific act of domestic violence person, a child, present at an act of violence, may also be a victim of domestic violence, without the act being aimed directly at it (Article 2, paragraph 2 of the LPDV).

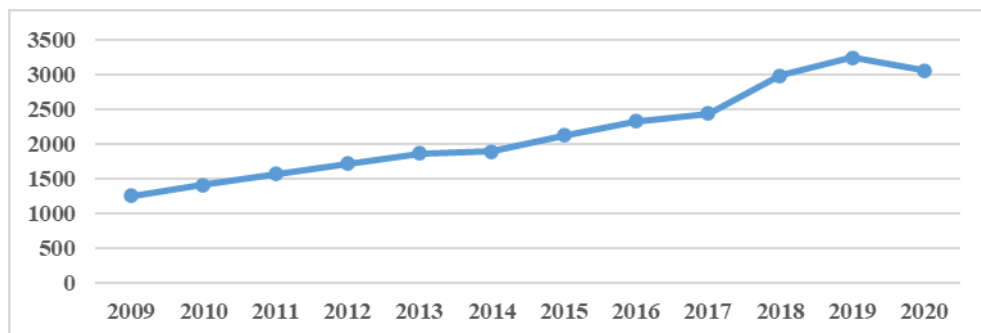
Although the statistics in the international and national plan eloquently show that the predominant perpetrators of acts of domestic violence are males and victims - females, in the current Bulgarian legislation there is no normative or factual obstacle to the reverse life and legal scenario.

The legal regulation of the victim of an act of domestic violence, constituting a crime, is regulated in the measures for protection of the victim under Article 67 of the PPC, informing the victim with specific needs for protection regarding the detention measures (Article 67a of the PPC), the rights of the victim in the pre-trial proceedings (Article 75 of the PPC), as well as in the regulated opportunities for active participation of the injured person in the criminal proceedings (Chapter 8 of the PPC): the right of the victim of a private crime to initiate and maintain criminal proceedings; the right of the victim of a crime of a general nature to participate as a private prosecutor and / or to be constituted as a civil plaintiff for compensation of the property and non-property damages, suffered by him.

The case law on the implementation of LPDV in Bulgaria is characterized by a small volume in the first two years of its entry into force, but since 2009 the stability of the initiated proceedings and the number of issued protection orders has been reported. The analysis of the initiated cases shows that more and more victims are informed about the possibility to seek protection in the framework of proceedings for imposition of protection measures under the LPDV. If in the first few years, the orders issued ranged from about 300 in 2005 to about 800 in 2008, then in the last year their number has increased significantly - 3057 (fig. 1)⁴.

⁴ The data are based on the orders for protection from the respective courts sent ex officio to the regional office of the Ministry of Interior on the grounds of Art. 16, para. 3 and Art. 18, para. 2 LPDV.



Figure 1. Orders issued for protection against domestic violence⁵

Source: own representation

According to Nina Belova, “domestic murder in the narrow sense of the word means crimes that are the result of conflicts between individuals that have arisen on domestic occasions. In a broader sense, however, murders related to rituals for health, fertility and others can be considered as domestic, as well as some serial murders, the motives of which are in the sphere of domestic communication” (Belova, 2012, p. 1). In addition, it should be noted that a victim of domestic murder may be a third party victimized as a result of an accidental, rapidly escalating event, by mistake or as a result of his interpersonal relationship with a person at the root of the conflict with the perpetrator.

2. Murder committed as a result of domestic violence

As the most severe form of assault on the person, Bulgarian and European and global legislation have outlined the murder - whether in its intentional or reckless form.

In the Bulgarian criminal law the commitment of murder under the conditions of domestic violence was introduced by the legislator relatively recently - in January 2019 and is defined in the provision of Art. 116, para. 1, item 6a of the Penal Code.

The specificity of premeditated killings is aptly illustrated by the UN-published scheme of forced death⁶. According to the proposed classification, premeditated murders are divided into: murders related to other criminal activity; killings committed as a result of interpersonal relationships and socio-political

⁵ The study includes both temporary orders for immediate protection, issued in case of data on direct, immediate or subsequent danger to the life or health of the injured person, and final ones, according to the LPDV. It is possible for more than one order to be issued to one person.

⁶ The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), UNDOC, 2015; UNDOC Homicide Statistics (2013).

killings. For their part, domestic homicides committed as a result of domestic violence are an integral part of the second category murders (UNDOC, 2015, 14). In most cases, the perpetrator of murder in a family or cohabitation is the perpetrator of chronic domestic violence, but in practice there are known life scenarios in which the victim of violence commits the incriminating act with a lethal outcome. For the most part, spontaneous - triggered by a recent stressful event or the result of a cumulative accumulation of stress, it is possible that this type of murder is also carefully planned (organized), in which there are often indications to „fix“ the crime in the pursuit of the perpetrator to express his remorse or erase the traces in order to mislead the investigation.

Straddling the divide between the private and public spheres, much of interpersonal homicides is attributed to the very nature of coexisting with others. Central to its definition is the fact that interpersonal homicide is not instrumental to the accomplishment of a secondary goal, but is rather a means of resolving a conflict and / or punishing the victim through violence when relationships come under strain (including from friction due to social and cultural norms).

Its two main sub-types, intimate partner/family-related homicide and homicide related to other interpersonal conflicts are distinguished from each other by the nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim. This means that in homicides related to intimate partners or family members, the relationship between victim and perpetrator is characterized by an emotional attachment, as well as other links, often of an economic or legal nature, whereas the perpetrator and victim in other interpersonal-related homicide may or may not know each other⁷.

The Penal Code treats the murder of a mother, a biological child, a pregnant woman or a minor person, as an aggravated case of murder (Art. 116, par. 1, items 3-4 of the Penal Code). Although such cases have not been publicised, honour killings can be subsumed under that provision. (Honour-related homicides are the killings of (mostly) women or girls by a member of their family for an actual or presumed act of sexual or behavioural trans-gression (such as adultery, sexual intercourse or pregnancy outside marriage, refusal to enter an arranged marriage, wearing certain clothing or engaging in activities deemed unsuitable) that is perceived to bring shame upon their family. Such killings are the ultimate manifestation of discrimination against women and girls; the ultimate act of gender-based violence).

Regardless of the intense turnover to which they are subjected in modern language, the terms „conventional crime“ and „premeditated murders committed for domestic reasons“ are defined differently by different authors. To date, only a definition in criminological terminology has not been introduced and adopted. In recent years and months, scientists around the world have paid special attention to the importance, theoretical and practical significance of the study of criminological problems in homicides committed for domestic motives.

⁷ https://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/Chapter_2-2.pdf



In a 2016 report “System of Measures of the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior to Limit the Levels of Domestic Crime in the Country”, crime committed for household motivations, also called “conventional crime”, was defined as a term introduced by practice to distinguish it from “organized crime”. It includes criminal encroachments directed against the person and property of citizens, namely: murders; infliction of bodily injuries, crimes against property; crimes against motor vehicles; robberies; drug-related crimes; as well as other criminal acts, which due to their mass nature are a problem for specific settlements.

3. Criminological characteristics of murders committed as a result of domestic violence

The results described below are derived from an author’s study of all premeditated murders registered and discovered in the country for the period from 01.01.2016 to 31.12.2020, and it should be noted that in the other cases, the criminal process is not over yet.

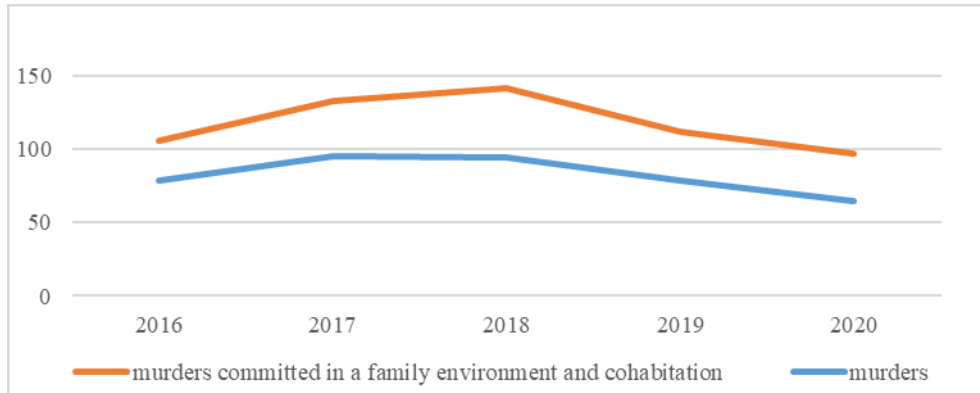
The average relative part of crimes against the person in relation to all criminal offenses committed during the period under review is 6%. On the other hand, the average part of murders committed (Art. 115 - 127 of the Penal Code) in relation to all crimes against the person is 7%. The premeditated murders under Art. 115 - 116 of the Penal Code and Art. 118 of the Penal Code make up an average of 20% of the latter. Characterized by a low relative part (0.02% -0.04%), high and stable detection rates (almost 100%), homicides committed in a family environment or in cohabitation (former or present), as a result of domestic violence, represent a significant problem, given the high degree of danger of this type of crime and the wide public response. Their average part in relation to the murders under the main Art. 115 of the Penal Code, the qualified panels of Art. 116 of the Penal Code and Art. 118 of the Penal Code, in which the legislator has considered the murder committed in a state of strong irritation, which was caused by the victim with specifically described actions, is 30%. Intentional homicides in themselves victimize the families and individuals around the victims, who can be identified as secondary victims. The efforts and interests of the Bulgarian state institutions, non-governmental organizations, private economic entities and the public in general are aimed at preventing and reducing the criminal acts in question.

For the period from 01.01.2016 to 31.12.2020 a total of 412 premeditated murders were registered, of which 178 (43%) were domestic murders committed in a family environment, including an extended one, or in cohabitation (current or former formation), on average 36 per year, under Art. 115, Art. 116 and Art. 118 of the Penal Code (those under Art. 116, para 1, items 1, 2 and 10 of the Penal Code are not included).



Some of the scenarios include family members who may have tried to step in to prevent an intimate partner violence incident that was happening. This could include bystanders, even, that just were at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Figure 2. Intentional homicides in general and homicides committed in a family environment and cohabitation for the period from 2016 to 2020



Source: own representation

Monitoring the dynamics of homicides committed as a result of domestic violence (excluding neonatal homicides and cases of suicide) shows that one volatile resilience was registered in the five-year period under review - out of 27 cases in 2016, 38 for 2017, 48 in 2018, 33 for 2019, to 32 - for 2020 (Fig. 2). Obviously for this type of crime it can be stated that despite the drastic increase in the first period of the study, in the second - the process decreases and maintains a constant level, and in the last 2020, the murders in question accounted for 51% of all premeditated murders committed in the country.

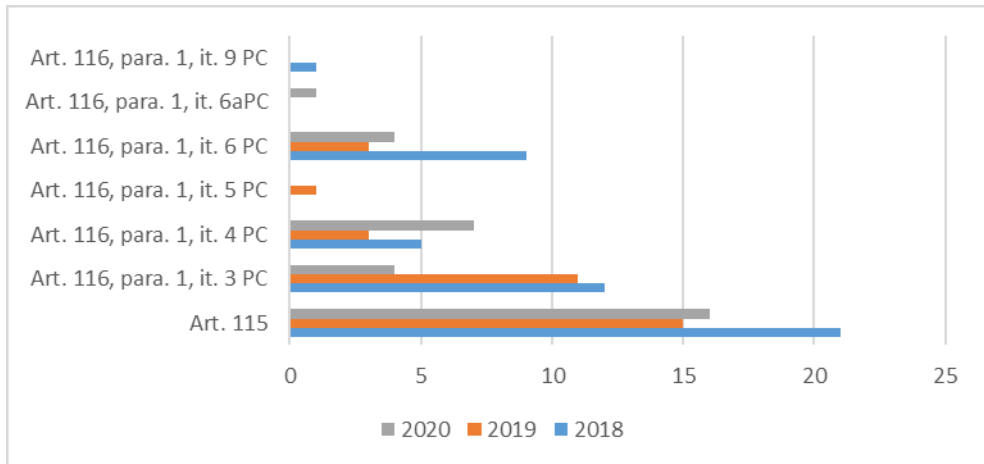
The reasons for this trend can be found in the intensive migration from villages to cities, and mainly to the capital, where logically the largest number of murders of this type are registered. The difficult adaptation of migrants, accompanied by accumulated frustration and the experience of crisis situations lead to the creation of criminological prerequisites for the commitment of such crimes. Lack of education, unemployment, marginalization, weakened social control, alcohol and drug addiction are all factors that make a significant contribution to the observed criminological picture along the line. In no way should we miss the impact of the restrictions imposed in connection with the pandemic of COVID-19 for most of 2020, as well as the introduction in 2019 of the qualified staff under Art. 116, para. 1, item 6a of the Penal Code, concerning the commitment of premeditated murder in the conditions of domestic violence.

The analysis of the data for the last three years shows that the highest risk associated with murders as a result of domestic violence and domestic homicides in

general exists in cities. The priority place for these murders is the victim's home and in the immediate vicinity, as well as in some cases - the victim's place of work.

The structure of the targeted killings for the last three years is illustrated in the next fig. 3:

Figure 3. Murders committed in a family environment and cohabitation for the period 2018-2020



Source: own representation

During the three-year period, a total of 113 premeditated murders committed as a result of domestic violence against family members, household members, former or current intimate partners were registered and solved. In 3 of the studied cases the perpetrators are two in complicity, as co-perpetrators. On the other hand, 6 of the murders are double (in two of them children were killed), one is triple and two have four victims each. Mass homicides (with four and more victims) captures the attention of the public, the media and policymakers the world over, but they are actually low-frequency events.

In the context of the study it is important to point out that “familicide” refers to the killing of multiple family members. In its most common form, it is the killing of an intimate partner and child(ren), but may also include the killing of parents and/or siblings. While typically considered a form of intimate partner homicide, given the number of victims in such events, this type of homicide is often “mass murder”.

At the same time, perpetrators of domestic violence are predominantly 102 male (90%) versus 13 female (10%). Respective, however, is the situation with victims, where women make up 60% (75) and men the remaining 40% (51). This is one of the reasons when talking about domestic violence, to address the issue of gender equality and to comment extensively on gender-based violence.

These findings show that even though men are the principal victims of homicide commonly, women continue to bear the heaviest burden of lethal victimization as a result of gender stereotypes and inequality. Many of the victims of “femicide” are killed by their current and former partners, but they are also killed by fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters and other family members because of their role and status as women. The death of those killed by intimate partners does not usually result from random or spontaneous acts, but rather from the culmination of prior gender-related violence. Jealousy and fear of abandonment are among the motives.

As for the age of male perpetrators, according to statistics, the largest number represent the age range of 31-40 years (20%), followed by the two neighboring decades: from 21-30 years (18%) and from 41-50 years (16%). Despite their modest part, the age groups of 31-40 years (31%) and 61-70 years (23%) are most clearly represented among women. The age group of 71-80 years (9%) and 51-60 years (8%) is most pronounced in men killed in murders in a family environment or cohabitation, while in women these are as follows: 41-50 years (19%), 31-40 years and 61-70 years with 16%, followed by 21-30 years and 71-80 years with 15%, i.e. almost every age is at risk for such a category of crimes against women.

Alcohol abuse or dependence was reported in 31 of the perpetrators of the murders in question (27%), and in 4% - drug addiction or abuse. At the same time, 19% of the perpetrators had some kind of mental problem or illness, and some of them have in the past been placed in mental health centers for treatment of varying duration, and the most common diagnoses are: schizophrenia and manic disorders. In some of the cases, information was gathered that the perpetrators did not take the prescribed medication, which sharply worsened their health and the environment in the household in which they lived with their relatives. Although rare, a combination of non-compliance with treatment and alcohol and / or drug abuse has been reported. 15% of the victims also abused alcohol and 3% drug. Almost 1/3 of the perpetrators have a past criminal record, and 36% are defined as abusers in families or cohabitation on a family basis, in the run-up to 4% of victims. Almost 9% of the killers went into hiding after the crime was completed and were declared wanted nationwide, but 7% called the European emergency phone number 112 or their relatives to report what they had done. Indicators of chronic domestic violence were presented in almost 37% of cases. In these cases, the logical conclusion of the prolonged, systematic, physical and mental harassment exercised over the victim over time, and in some cases sexual harassment, which the victim failed to cope with due to intellectual deficits and manipulateness, as well as due to the negligence of relatives. and the cumbersomeness of the actions of the respective state institutions for social protection of such persons is the violent lethal end.

Low socio-economic status as a result of unemployment, low wages and pensions, overcrowded homes, low culture, alcohol use and abuse, drug addiction, jealousy, sexual impotence, various mental illnesses and other criminogenic factors



create a favorable environment for domestic violence. Apart from the victims of the so-called „marital violence“ (wife by husband and vice versa), in hospitals medical care is provided to persons injured in beatings between other family members: parents - children, grandchildren and vice versa. Data from existing research show that both wives and husbands are subjected to physical violence, but due to the prevalence of physical capabilities of men, women suffer more often. The effect of marital violence covers all degrees of bodily harm, including fatal injuries, with the exception of the „third age“ (the elderly people). Often women have scars of the so-called „abused wives“ - with traces of prolonged, repeated and severe beatings. In parent-child relationships, parents are more likely to be abused, particularly by their sons. The difference between the injured daughters and sons is minimal, and the act was committed in most cases by the fathers.

In the last three years of the 113 murders committed within the extended family circle and cohabitation (current or former format), in 59% men have taken the life of a woman; in 41% - men to men; in 8% - women intentionally killed a man, and only in 4% - women murdered women. Typically, 16% of the total number of murders of the type and period in question were committed in the context of de facto separation or in the process of dissolving a civil marriage between spouses or cohabitants on a family basis. 31 couples living together on a family basis and 18 married are affected.

There are two main theoretical approaches in intimate partner homicide research, notably the “gender perspective” that sees intimate partner violence, particularly against women, as an instrument used by men to maintain their dominance in a patriarchal society, where gender roles and relationships are often crystallized in certain practices and where violence may be a tool to enforce them. The other perspective, the “violence perspective” suggests that the motivation for homicide against intimate partners is no different from the motivation for other types of violence, such as individual defiance or social disadvantage.

In a number of cases, the murder took place against the backdrop of previous antisocial behavior, creating a climate of violence. The perpetrator’s behavior followed the spiral of domestic violence⁸, according to which acts of violence have a consistent and growing aggression, and the murder is the result of an uncontrollable escalation of the same violence⁹.

The jealous motive is typical (in 50 cases), and the usual reason is the victim’s desire to end their relationship with the perpetrator, which explains why most of the victims of such crimes are former or current wives or partners. In

⁸ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence № 210, opened for signature and ratification on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul.

⁹ In 1979, the American criminologist and clinical psychologist Lenner Walker came to the conclusion that most of the human relationships in which there are manifestations of violence are characterized by common features, summarized and described by him in the so-called „cycle of violence“.

practice, however, the motivation for these murders is multi-fragmentary, and in addition to jealousy, there is revenge, a desire for power and punishment, sadistic motives, property gain, and so on. Homicide of this type is the ultimate consequence of unequal power relationships between men and women in the private sphere, which it serves to reinforce and sustain.

In recent years, several cases of advanced melancholic suicides¹⁰ have been registered, and a specific feature of all of them is that the means by which they are committed is a legally possessed firearm. In this regard, the legislator has ordered, in case of orders issued under the LPDV, to immediately confiscate the legal firearm of the perpetrator¹¹. 15% of perpetrators of murders in a family environment or cohabitation have committed suicide after the murder (with a knife, firearm, hanging, acid or falling from a height), 5% have made such an attempt, and 2% have threatened to take their own lives, as in 13% of those who took their own lives - they were transported and received emergency medical care. It is noteworthy that in all cases of suicide of a perpetrator of murder committed as a result of domestic violence, if a knife or pistol is used in the first act, the suicide is committed by the same means, while in cases of beating and pushing from the terrace, the perpetrator subsequently hangs himself or swallows poisonous substances, or jumps from the terrace. In 16% of cases, medical teams made efforts to save the life of one of the victims, but given the previous, categorical, intensive and decisive actions of the perpetrator to kill, during their transportation or later in the hospital, they have died.

The most common violent death in the cases under consideration is the result of: beatings - with hands, kicks or with the help of various handy materials (shovel, pipe, cane, hammer, bat, etc.) - in almost half of the cases; the use of a knife or other sharp and cutting objects (fork, pitchfork, etc.) - in 46 cases and cutting with an ax - in 7 of them; firearms (rifles and pistols, including modified ones), acquired legally or illegally - in 14 cases and strangulation - in 13 cases.

In practice, there have been cases where only children have been killed, but the specificity is that, with few exceptions, the crime is directed at their mother and the aim is to punish her for behavior that the perpetrator interprets as rejection, neglect or jealousy.

Respectively, there have been cases in which a victim of domestic violence commits the murder of his abuser in order to stop this process or to protect third

¹⁰ Cases of murders of family members and subsequent suicide or attempted suicide of the perpetrator, defined in the 30s of the last century by the great Bulgarian psychiatrist Prof. Nikola Shipkovenski.

¹¹ According to Art. 58, para. 1, item 6 of the Law on weapons, ammunition, explosives and pyrotechnic products - Permits for acquisition and / or storage of explosives and pyrotechnic articles, permits for acquisition, storage and / or carrying and use of firearms and ammunition for them shall not be issued to a person against whom during the last three For years, protection measures have been imposed under the Domestic Violence Protection Act.



parties who have been abused because of it - children, parents, relatives, etc., and it is possible to fall into the hypothesis of kinship criminal solidarity.

The information available shows that, other than gender-related killings in conflict settings, gender-related killings of women and girls outside the family are relatively rare in comparison to killings perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members.

3. Forensic characteristics of murders committed as a result of domestic violence

The high degree of latency of the various forms of acts of domestic violence, which often remain hidden from others, is rooted in the victims' grounds for not informing the police, namely - fear of revenge; the conviction that the police should not interfere in such delicate relations; the victim's desire to solve the problem on their own; pressure exerted by relatives and friends of the victim, etc. In many cases, victims avoid contacting the police because of doubts about the proper resolution of the case or because of the painful procedures in criminal proceedings. The fact that only a small number of victims of domestic violence share their experiences has been nominated as a major challenge for law enforcement. This, of course, despite the preconditions for a successful investigation of most cases, leads to insufficient effectiveness against acts of domestic violence. The survivor of domestic violence must be informed about the possible actions he / she can take in order to receive protection under the LPDV, but at the same time to seek civil, administrative and criminal liability of the perpetrator.

The actual investigation of a murder committed under conditions of domestic violence takes place in an environment that does not differ much from the established in theory and practice algorithm and methodology for the investigation of domestic murder.

The main and most significant features of the forensic characteristics of the crime in question are contained mainly in the available initial information about the manner and mechanism of its commitment, the circumstances in which it was committed, its time and place, as well as in relation to the personality of the perpetrator of the encroachment in question.

The manner of committing the crime as an element of the forensic characteristic should be understood as the set of objective and subjective factors determining the behavior of the perpetrator of the crime before, during and after the criminal encroachment, as well as the external (outside the will of the participants in the criminal event) manifestations (consequences) that occurred as a result of the commitment of this crime. In this regard, investigators have the task of establishing the perpetrator's behavior at an earlier stage, which concerns a period back in time; the development of the perpetrator-victim relationship; the external factors that determine the development of these relations. The scope of the investigation should

discuss and analyze the methods and means used by the perpetrator to commit the criminal act, as well as the form of guilt - negligence or intent committed in the encroachment.

The indications time and place of commitment of the crime are elements of the forensic characteristic, the clarification of which contributes to the collection of evidence as a whole and should be established in the course of the investigation. Information about the time of the crime can be obtained from various sources and by carrying out various investigative actions - by studying the traces of the crime, including examination of items and objects found at the crime scene relevant to the subject of investigation, by questioning witnesses, as well as by analyzing the state of other accompanying actions, phenomena and processes that preceded, arose and developed in connection with the committed criminal event.

In the forensic literature, the crime scene is most often defined as a section of the area or premises where the crime was committed, and the crime scene as a section of the area or room where traces of the investigated event were found. The scene of the accident may coincide with the crime scene if traces of the crime are found where the crime was committed. Accidents at the same event can be several according to the specifics of the case and the development of the respective investigative situation. Another significance for the crime scene is from the point of view of establishing links between the victim and the perpetrator. There is always a connection, as in the investigation of a murder committed under domestic violence.

Another essential feature - an element of the forensic characteristics of the crimes in question, namely the personality of the perpetrator, includes the study, knowledge and identification of this person (whose criminological features were discussed above). The personality of the perpetrator of a crime is indisputably the subject of criminological knowledge, insofar as he possesses personal individual mental characteristics characterizing his needs, intellect, will and other properties and qualities. The individuality of the perpetrator, however, acquires its forensic significance when it can be a source of versions and information landmark, as well as in making tactical decisions and their implementation in conducting investigative actions in pre-trial proceedings.

Conclusions

Every act of violence and assault on the person of a human individual creates a climate of fear and insecurity, and when justice is not substantial, impunity can lead to greater victimization, which means denying the basic human right to justice. The professional approach requires explanatory and sufficient number of interviews with the relatives of the victims of this type of violence. The aim is both to give a certain line of behavior to relatives and friends, given the special psychological and emotional state of the victims after the injury, and to emphasize the need to monitor the moods and behavior of victims, in view of the risk of suicide and their timely prevention.



Given the desire to provide timely and comprehensive care, as well as effective assistance to victims of domestic violence, the so-called crisis centers for support of victims of domestic violence are assessed as an urgent need for the Bulgarian reality.

The latency of these acts requires constant monitoring of the criminal contingent along the line by the police authorities, given their recurrence and the characteristic increasing intensity of the violence. In this regard, a procedure for building an automated information system is currently underway at the Ministry of Interior. As it is known, good results in the work of law enforcement institutions are obtained when they are familiar with the mechanism and principle of processing the received signals of violence. In this regard, work should be done to increase the competencies of the employees of the Ministry of Interior, social workers, representatives of the prosecution and the court, to recognize and assess violence, as well as adequate intervention. There is a need for constant training and implementation of a policy for prevention of this type of acts, with the assistance of all institutions and non-governmental organizations whose activities are related to combating violence in its various forms, as well as improving service delivery, drafting and amending laws, creation of a mechanism for coordination, education and training of specialists. In order to respond effectively to this phenomenon, specialized training programs for police officers should be developed and implemented, both during their initial training and at a later stage throughout the career process.

The enduring risk factors for intimate partner/family-related homicide may explain some of the stability of its prevalence. When not addressed through non-violent mechanisms of reconciliation, conflicts and disputes between individuals living in family contexts or as couples can have violent outcomes, especially when certain concomitant factors or enablers are at play, such as power relations based on gender, or patterns of alcohol use. Factors of that nature tend not to change in the short term (UNDOC, 2015).

Also a more comprehensive range of coordinated services needs to be provided by the police, criminal justice systems, and health and social services. Moreover, in order to prevent and tackle gender-related killing of women and girls, men need to be involved in efforts to combat intimate partner violence/family-related homicide and in changing cultural norms that move away from violent masculinity and gender stereotypes.

Given the relatively recent addition of the new qualified panel „in conditions of domestic violence“ to the main panel of some acts in the Bulgarian criminal law, it is necessary to take some time to accumulate the relevant case law, on the basis of which to be the relevant analyzes and conclusions concerning the criminogenic situation and the adequate prevention with regard to the considered crimes have been made.



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