

URGENT ACTION

PERSECUTION OF GAY MEN IN CHECHNYA RESUMES

According to a *Russian LGBT Network* report published in July, the persecution of gay men in Chechnya has resumed. The Chechen authorities continue to deny that gay people even exist in Chechnya.

On 11 July the NGO *Russian LGBT Network* reported the persecution of both gay men in Chechnya had resumed and on 31 July shared testimonies from 33 different LGBT people in Chechnya who had been persecuted, illegally detained, tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Their accounts highlight the extent of the brutality they were subject to and the Chechen authorities' direct involvement. According to credible sources, the authorities have also been threatening both the victims and their families with criminal charges for making any "false" accusations.

Meanwhile, the Chechen authorities continue to deny that gay men even exist in Chechnya. During an interview with HBO reporter David Scott for the TV show, "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel", Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov was questioned about reports of gay men facing persecution. In response, Ramzan Kadyrov laughed and said, "[T]his is nonsense. We don't have those kind of people here. We don't have any gays. If there are any, take them to Canada... Take them far away from us, so we don't have them at home. To purify our blood, if there are any here, take them." When Ramzan Kadyrov was pressed further on whether he was concerned about the reports, he replied, "They [gay men] are devils. They are for sale. They are not human. God damn them for what they are accusing us of."

Such statements, issued by both the Head of Chechnya and other Chechen officials, are not the first of their kind and demonstrate just how dangerous it is to be, or perceived to be, LGBTI in Chechnya. The Russian federal investigative authorities meanwhile remain silent on the matter and their "preliminary investigations" into the reports of abductions and killings of gay men in Chechnya appear to be stalled and unlikely to deliver any plausible results without political will at the highest level.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation and campaign for full and effective investigation of these reports, and for protection and justice for the victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the second update of UA 80/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/6075/2017/en/

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