

## **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

### **HOMOPHOBIC CRACKDOWN IN CHECHNYA RESUMES**

The Chechen authorities have unleashed a new wave of homophobic attacks since the end of December 2018. At least 40 people believed to be gay or lesbian have been arbitrarily detained and tortured in Chechnya, a republic in the south of Russia.

Around 40 individuals have reportedly been detained in a government building in the city of Argun, where they have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. At least two individuals are reported to have died after being tortured, but the actual number of victims may be higher. The authorities are also said to be destroying the individuals' passports. This makes it difficult for them to flee Chechnya in the future. The Russian authorities' failure to investigate the 2017 attacks - which involved the abduction and killing of 100 gay men and women and for which no one has yet been held accountable - has enabled this homophobic crackdown to resume.

The Russian Federation has an obligation under international human rights law to prohibit discrimination and to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

**Please send a tweet, fax or letter without delay.** (Postage is \$2.50.) **Urge President Putin**

- \* to carry out a prompt, effective and thorough investigation into the reports of homophobic detention, torture and killings in Chechnya
- \* to ensure that anyone found guilty or complicit in such crimes is brought to justice
- \* to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of those who may be at risk in Chechnya because of their real or perceived sexual orientation
- \* to condemn in the strongest terms possible any homophobic comments made by officials against individuals due to their real or perceived sexual orientation.

#### **Write to**

Vladimir Putin  
President of the Russian Federation  
Ul. Ilyinka, 23  
103132 Moscow  
Russian Federation

Twitter: @KremlinRussia or @KremlinRussia\_E

Fax: 011 7 495 910 2134

Salutation: Dear President

**Please copy**

His Excellency Alexander Darchiev  
Ambassador for the Russian Federation  
285 Charlotte Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L5  
Fax: 613 236 6342  
Phone: 613 235 4341 or 613 236 1413  
Email: [info@rusembassy.ca](mailto:info@rusembassy.ca)

**Chair of the Investigation Committee**

Aleksandr Bastrykin  
Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation  
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2  
105005 Moscow, Russian Federation  
Fax: 011 7 495 966 9776

**Additional information**

On 1 April 2017, the Russian independent daily newspaper, Novaya Gazeta, reported that over a hundred men believed to be gay had been abducted in Chechnya as part of a coordinated campaign by the local authorities. The men were reportedly tortured and ill-treated in other ways, and forced to disclose other LGBTI individuals known to them. Novaya Gazeta claimed to have verified information about at least three men who had been killed by their captors, but its sources claimed that there had been many more killings. Officials in Chechnya and Moscow continuously denied these allegations and the preliminary criminal investigation into allegations of Maxim Lapunov, the only victim who came forward, was closed.

On 30 August 2018, 15 members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) enacted the Vienna Mechanism, seeking truth about and justice for those grave human rights violations in Chechnya and demanding effective investigations into, among others, violations committed against actual or perceived LGBTI persons which occurred in 2017.

On 1 November 2018, after not having received an adequate reply from the Russian Federation, 16 participating States of the OSCE enacted the Moscow Mechanism and tasked Professor Wolfgang Benedek to write a report on the alleged human rights violations and impunity in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The report, issued on 20 December 2018, confirmed the allegations of serious human rights violations in Chechnya - in particular, allegations of harassment and persecution, arbitrary arrests or detention, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions of people. These include, but are not limited to, LGBTI persons, human rights defenders, lawyers, independent media and civil society organizations. The report also noted that there is a climate of impunity in Chechnya, which is detrimental to any accountability for human rights violations. The report made several recommendations to the Russian Federation including opening an inquiry into the allegations, establishing a special investigative committee to conduct effective, impartial and transparent investigation of the allegations, and opening a criminal investigation into violations against Maxim Lapunov. Eight days after the report was issued, the authorities resumed their persecution of actual or perceived LGBTI people in Chechnya.