
Amnesty International

YOUTH GROUP ACTION




Campaign: Individuals at Risk

July 2017

CHECHNYA

STOP
**ABDUCTING
AND KILLING
GAY MEN**

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL 

Contents

In a nutshell
Background
Take action: Write to the authorities in Chechnya

Page

2
2-3
4

We hope you will feel inspired to take action on all of our campaigns but remind you that all actions are optional.

This mailing is also available to download at

www.amnesty.org.uk/youth

YOUTH GROUP ACTION

In a nutshell

Over a hundred men suspected of being gay have been abducted, tortured and some even killed in the southern Russian republic of Chechnya.

The Chechen government won't admit that gay men even exist in Chechnya nor that they ordered what the police call 'preventive mopping up' of people they consider undesirable. We urgently need your help to call out the Chechen government on the persecution of people who are, as they put it, of 'non-traditional orientation', and urge immediate action to ensure their safety

Abductions, torture and killings

According to independent daily newspaper, *Novaya Gazeta*, up to 100 men suspected of being gay have been abducted as part of a coordinated government campaign. It claims the men have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated, and three are reported to have been killed by their captors – but there could be more.

Our researchers have spoken to some of the men who managed to escape Chechnya. They talked about their harrowing experiences, but for the sake of their safety we are unable to provide details.

We do however, need you to urge the Russian and Chechen authorities to investigate these abductions and bring those responsible to justice.

Government cover-up

Far from taking responsibility, the Chechen authorities deny that gay men even exist in Chechnya.

'You cannot arrest or repress people who just don't exist in the republic,' Kadyrov spokesman Alvi Karimov told *Interfax*, an independent news agency in Russia. *'If there were such people in Chechnya, the law-enforcement organs wouldn't need to have anything to do with them because their relatives would send them somewhere from which there is no returning.'*

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'Honour killings'

Even though some men have reportedly been released - possibly because their captors were unable to verify their sexual orientation - they remain in grave danger because of local homophobia and intolerance. They may even be at risk of being killed by their own families.

'Honour killings' are still practiced in the North Caucasus, particularly in deeply conservative Chechnya. Men deemed to have 'tarnished' the family's honour are often killed by a family member.

Kheda Saratova, a member of the Human Rights Council, has commented that Chechen society and Chechnya's 'whole justice system' would treat anyone who kills a gay relative 'with understanding'.

She later claimed that she had been misunderstood and that the revelation that there were gay men in Chechnya had shocked her so much that she was unable to think clearly.

We need your help to remind the Russian and Chechen authorities that members of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-sexual, intersex) community have a right to feel safe and secure and it is their duty to protect that right.

Growing anti-gay sentiment

According to *Novaya Gazeta*, an atmosphere of anti-gay feeling has been growing in Chechnya since early March when local media reported that Moscow-based gay rights group GayRussia.ru had applied for permits to stage gay rights rallies across Russia.

Members of the NGO Russian LGBTI network have created a hotline offering help to those who may be looking for safety outside the region. However, there are also anonymous warnings online that some of the offers of help made over the internet may be used by criminals to track down other LGBTI individuals.

We need your help to call for prompt, effective and thorough investigations into the reports of abductions and killings of men believed to be gay in Chechnya. Anyone found guilty or complicit in such crimes must be brought to justice.

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TAKE ACTION: WRITE TO THE CHECHEN AUTHORITIES

Ask them to:

- Carry out prompt, effective and thorough investigations into the reports of the abductions and killing of men believed to be gay in Chechnya
- Ensure that anyone found guilty or complicit in such crimes will be brought to justice
- Take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of any individual who may be at risk in Chechnya because of their sexual orientation
- Condemn in the strongest terms possible any discriminatory comments made by officials.

Send your letters to:

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin

Chairman of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation

Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2

105005 Moscow, Russian Federation

Start your letter: Dear Chairman

Please note we have pre-printed action cards for this campaign action. You can be ordered from our mailing house by contacting them on **01788 545553** and quoting the code **LGBTI0003**.
