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One Year Since Gay Purge in Chechnya, Perpetrators Remain Unprosecuted (<https://www.outrightinternational.org/content/one-year-gay-purge-chechnya-perpetrators-remain-unprosecuted>)

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At the beginning of April 2017, Novaya Gazeta, a Russian newspaper, broke the news that more than 100 men perceived to be gay or bisexual were rounded up, sent to secret detention centers, and tortured in Chechnya. Reports since then have estimated that more than 20 men were murdered or died while in detention and the number of those detained could be as high as 200.

Hundreds have since fled Chechnya looking for safety and asylum, while continuing to fear for their lives. Men who escaped or survived the detention have spoken out and detailed the inhumane treatment they were subjected to, which included beatings, verbal and physical harassment, and even electrocution.

A year has passed since the world first heard of the crackdown in Chechnya, yet Russian authorities have failed to act or hold anyone accountable for these horrific crimes.

Ramzan Kadyrov, leader of the Chechen Republic, continues to deny that these crimes took place, and is known to have gone so far as to claim that gay people “just don’t exist in the republic.” Kadyrov’s spokesman also said, “Even if such people existed in Chechnya, our law enforcement agencies would not need to bother with them, because their own relatives would simply send them to a place from which they would never return.” However, reports claim that the gay purge was ordered and directed by the highest officials in the state.

Justice has yet to be served for the Chechen men who were detained, tortured, or killed, as well as for all those who were forced to flee for fear of persecution.

OutRight spoke to Natalia Poplevskaya, from the Russian LGBT Network, which has spearheaded efforts to help LGBT Chechens escape from the region and find safety elsewhere. She said, “we continue demanding a credible investigation carried out by Federal investigating authorities properly, as by the moment still no criminal case is initiated.”

OutRight stands with the Russian LGBT Network and all others calling for the Russian government to immediately launch an investigation into the detention, torture, and murder, of perceived gay and bisexual men in Chechnya. We cannot allow for the perpetrators of these crimes to get away with impunity.

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