



Eurasian Key Population Health Network (EKHN) Public Statement on Chechnya gay killings and roundups

We have come to expect the unexpected!

EKHN is very disappointed to see this week several media (i.e. www.independent.co.uk) reports emerging from Chechnya of a systematic campaign of violence directed specifically at gay men and, presumably, also bisexual men and Trans*. Russian media and Amnesty International warn that those deemed “undesirable” by the authorities are being subjected to “preventive mopping up”, followed by arbitrary detention in the first concentration camp for homosexuals since Hitler, tortured with electric shocks and, in some cases, death at the hands of the Chechnya’s police.

By April 13, 2017 more than 100 gay men had been detained and three killed in Chechnya last week, the Daily Mail reported. Another report by Novoya Gazeta said authorities had set up several camps where homosexuals are killed or forced to promise to leave the republic.

This is cause for alarm – and action!

EKHN fillips Chechnya’s ‘authorities that failure to uphold the human rights of LGBTI people and protect them against abuses such as detention, torture and discriminatory laws and practices, constitute serious violations of international human rights law and have a far-reaching impact on society social and economic wellbeing, negatively on economic growth and country progress.

Having in facts, that EKHN, EKHN partners and others have documented widespread physical and psychological violence against LGBTI persons in Chechnya, including murder, assault, kidnapping, in institutional setting, we call:

- on the authorities to proceed with the immediate release of everyone unlawfully detained in the Republic of Chechnya on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, sexual behavior, gender identity and gender expression;
- to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all suspected cases of abduction, unlawful detention, torture and unlawful killing on the basis of people actual or perceived sexual orientation, sexual behavior, gender identity and gender expression;

- to ensure that victims are provided with effective remedy, social, medical care and assistance;

Working in Eurasia region with specific mandate on public health and especially working towards ending AIDS, TB and hepatitis, EKHN is recognizing that violence and discrimination present a significant barrier to health and health services, including for HIV and other STIs, and calls on governments, parliaments, judiciaries, national human rights institutions, community, religious, political leaders, workers' organizations, the private sector, health providers, civil society organizations and the media to stand up for:

- Investigating, prosecuting and providing remedy for acts of violence, torture and ill-treatment against LGBTI adults and adolescents in Chechnya and those who defend their human rights, including EKHN;
- Promoting human rights standards and gender equality approaches in national health care policies and public health strategies, including HIV/AIDS and other STIs;
- Strengthening efforts to prevent, monitor and report such violence;
- Urging Russian authorities for incorporating homophobia and transphobia as aggravating factors in federal laws;
- Recognizing that persecution of people because they are or are perceived to be LGBTI may constitute a valid ground for asylum, and not returning such refugees to Chechnya where their life or freedom might be threatened.

EKHN stand ready to support and assist LGBTI people in Chechnya and across the Eurasian region, and also state stakeholders as they work to address the challenges outlined in this statement including through constitutional, legislative and policy changes, strengthening of national institutions, and education, training and other initiatives to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of all LGBTI people in Eurasia and in Chechnya, particularly.