

Vladimir Putin  
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Dear President,

I am deeply concerned about the reports of grave human rights violations being carried out by the authorities in Chechnya, who since the end of December 2018 have launched a new wave of homophobic attacks in Chechnya. Around 40 people believed to be gay or lesbian have been reportedly 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, making 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.

I urge you to carry out a prompt, effective and thorough investigation into the reports of homophobic detention, torture and killings in Chechnya and to ensure that anyone found guilty or complicit in such crimes is brought to justice. I further urge you 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 and condemn in the strongest terms possible any homophobic comments made by officials against individuals due to their real or perceived sexual orientation.

Yours sincerely,