



October 17, 2017

Amnesty International urges the Senate to swiftly pass A resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya (S. Res. 211).

Dear Senator:

On behalf of Amnesty International and our more than seven million members and supporters worldwide, we urge you to pass S. Res 211, a resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya. This resolution will send a powerful signal to the Russian Federation, as well as countries around the world, that the persecution, arbitrary detention, and torture of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (“LGBT”) people will not be tolerated.

S. Res. 211 condemns Chechnya’s persecution of LGBT individuals and calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to protect the human rights of all its citizens. Furthermore, it calls on the U.S. government to condemn the violence and persecution in Chechnya, to demand the release of those wrongfully detained, and to identify individuals responsible for these human rights violations.

The resolution, spearheaded by Sen. Toomey (R-PA) and Sen. Markey (D-MA), was marked up and approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on October 5, 2017. The House already passed a companion resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya (H. Res. 351) in June.

In April 2017 Chechen authorities launched a state-sponsored purge of their LGBT population. Authorities arrested [100 men](#) who are gay or perceived to be gay without cause. Authorities [beat and in some cases tortured](#) these men. Authorities forced many men to disclose the names of other LGBT individuals. Chechen officials have [denied that LGBT people exist in Chechnya](#), and the Head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, has even implicitly encouraged so-called “honor killings” against them. Referring to LGBT people, [Kadyrov said](#), “If we have [gay] people here, I’m telling you officially their relatives won’t let them be because of our faith, our mentality,

customs, traditions ... Even if it's punishable under the law, we would still condone it.”

The persecution of LGBT individuals is not limited to Chechnya. In September 2017 authorities [in neighboring Azerbaijan](#) arrested over 50 gay and transgender people and subjected them to cruel and degrading treatment.

Such abuses are a clear violation of all countries' obligations under international law, including Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which expressly prohibits torture and degrading treatment, and Article 7 which states that all persons are entitled to equal protection without discrimination.

Passage of S. Res. 211 would send a strong message to Chechnya and the Russian Federation that the U.S. will not stand for such persecution and discrimination.

Amnesty International urges the Senate to pass S Res 211. For more information, please contact Daniel Balson at dbalson@aiusa.org or (202) 509-8132.

Sincerely,

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