

Petitioners Arrested Protesting Chechnya's LGBT Crackdown

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Five people have been arrested while delivering a petition calling for an investigation into the reported abuse of LGBT people in Russia's southern Chechen republic.

The group, who planned to hand in the petition at the Prosecutor General's Office in Moscow, had collected more than two million signatures from online activism platforms such as Change.org, All Out and Avaaz.

Nikita Safronov, a member of activist organization Open Russia, said that police arrested the group for holding “an unapproved demonstration.”

He told [Russia's RBC news outlet](#) that police officers arrived shortly after the activists left the city's Triumphalnaya Square.

Related article: [Detained, Tortured, Killed: How Chechnya Cracked Down on Gays](#)

The activists planned to call on Russia's Prosecutor General to investigate reports that gay men had been illegally detained, tortured and killed at the hands of the Chechen security services.

Russia's Novaya Gazeta newspaper reported in April that over 100 gay men had been held in secret prisons across the region, subjected to physical beatings and electric shocks.

The Kremlin has so far refused calls for a federal investigation, instead handing responsibility to the Chechen authorities.

Officials in Grozny have also denied the claims, with a spokesperson for Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov claiming that gay people "simply do not exist" in the republic.

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