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Reports Surface of Fresh Anti-Gay Purge in Chechnya

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Valery Matytsin / TASS

Activists in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Chechnya are warning of a new gay purge even as Chelyabinsk celebrated a small victory.

The Associated Press on Friday cited activist Igor Kochetkov as saying Chechnya has seen a spike in detentions of women and men suspected of being gay since December.

His comments came on the back of an article by investigative outlet Novaya Gazeta — which first reported on a widespread crackdown on LGBT people in Chechnya in April 2017 — that gay women and men in the republic were once again facing persecution.

The outlet said warnings were being posted on social media groups, citing one post which called on LGBT people to "flee the republic as soon as possible."

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe last month called for Russia to investigate the earlier reports.

Related article: Kadyrov Calls for Purging Chechnya of Gay Men, But Insists None Live There

Meanwhile, an LGBT activist group based in southern Russia has said prosecutors in the Siberian region of Chelyabinsk have "for the first time" ordered police to find and interrogate a resident for harassing one of the group's members online.

The "Solidarity" group, which is based in the city of Pyatigorsk, posted a screenshot of the abuse on its social media website Vkontakte page on Friday. Addressing activist Artyom Gordiyenko in derogatory terms, a Chelyabinsk-based Vkontakte user asked: "When will they eliminate all this gay stuff?"

The regional prosecutor's office confirmed to the 360tv.ru news channel that it had "organized an inspection" at the Chelyabinsk police branch.

The LGBT activist group's Vkontakte page said its authors have received more online threats and insults with increased media coverage.

"Of course, complaints will be sent to the authorities in relation to each of these," activist Artyom Shitukhin wrote on the group's Vkontakte page.

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