

2 Tortured to Death in New Anti-Gay Purge in Chechnya, Activist Says

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Anton Podgaiko / TASS

At least two members of the LGBT community have been killed as part of a new round of purges in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Chechnya, an activist has told The Moscow Times.

Reports surfaced last week that Chechnya has seen a spike since December in detentions of women and men suspected of being gay. A spokesman for Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who had maintained that there are no gay people in his region, [dismissed](#) the claims as "disinformation."

"I can confirm that two gay men were killed while being tortured," the head of the St. Petersburg-based LGBT Network, Igor Kochetkov, told The Moscow Times on Monday.

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He said around 40 people have been detained since the latest crackdown began on Dec. 29 and that Chechen police have confiscated the detainees' travel documents.

"This wasn't happening in 2017," he said, referring to Chechnya's crackdown on LGBT people first reported on by the investigative outlet Novaya Gazeta. "Everything is being done so that they can't flee the country."

"And this is very bad for us because it makes our work much more difficult in terms of evacuation," Kochetkov told The Moscow Times.

Meanwhile, the Meduza news website reported on Monday that between 10 and 20 gay men and women had been killed in Chechnya in the past month. It cited an exiled member of the North Caucasus LGBT community who said he maintains contacts with witnesses of the latest alleged purge.

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