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Chechnya Denies New Gay Purge, Warns Critics Not to 'Sow Seeds of Sodomy'

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Kavkaz.Realii

Chechen leadership has dismissed a report claiming that two gay men were killed and dozens more have been detained in Russia's North Caucasus republic.

A report by the Russian LGBT Network released Monday said that at least two gay men have been tortured to death in Chechnya since persecutions escalated dramatically there two weeks ago. Amnesty International has called on the international community to take steps to protect members of the besieged LGBT community in Chechnya against the renewed "spine-chilling" crackdown.

On Tuesday, the majority Muslim republic's minister of information Dzhambulat Umarov dismissed the St. Petersburg-based LGBT Network's report as "utter crap."

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Speculating that media outlets stand to make a considerable profit from "the words 'Chechen' and 'gay' to appear[ing] next to each other" in an interview with the U.S.-funded Kavkaz.Realii news website, Umarov said that reports are overblown.

He also stated, without providing evidence, that non-Chechens "buy up Chechen passports and call themselves Chechen" to improve their chances of receiving asylum outside Russia.

"If you're gay and you say you're being oppressed, any country will take you in," Umarov said.

On Monday, LGBT Network head Igor Kochetkov told The Moscow Times that Chechen police have been confiscating detainees' passports to prevent them from fleeing.

Umarov concluded his interview with a warning to critics.

"Don't sow the seeds of sodomy in the blessed land of the Caucasus," he said. "They will not grow [like] in perverted Europe ... Leave the Chechen republic alone."

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