

'She Was Not Afraid to Tell The Truth': Russia Reacts to LGBT Activist's Gruesome Killing

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Yelena Grigoryeva **Dinar Idrisov / Facebook**

The fatal stabbing of Russian LGBT activist Yelena Grigoriyeva in St. Petersburg has drawn strong reactions worldwide, with fellow activists lamenting a system that failed to protect her and anti-LGBT figures saying her killing was justified.

Related article: [Russian LGBT Activist Killed After Being Listed on 'Saw' - Inspired Gay Hunting Site](#)

Activists noted that a website that encourages visitors to “hunt down” people believed to be sexual minorities had [added](#) Grigoriyeva to a hit list in the weeks before her killing. The website, which took inspiration from the “Saw” horror film franchise, was [blocked](#) in Russia last week.

Here's a closer look at what happened and how Russia has reacted to the news:

What happened?

- Grigoriyeva, 41, was found with eight stab wounds and signs of strangulation near her home in central St. Petersburg over the weekend.
- Grigoriyeva had [posted](#) on her Facebook page about the threats two days before she was found dead.
- On Thursday, Russia's Investigative Committee said it had [detained](#) a 38-year-old native of Kyrgyzstan as the main suspect in Grigoriyeva's killing. Investigators said they had evidence to prove that her death was the result of a domestic dispute and that she had been familiar with the suspect.

What were the reactions?

- The Russian anti-LGBT activist Timur Bulatov [declared](#) Grigoriyeva's slaying to be an act of "moral jihad." Bulatov told the Znak.com news website that "this creature has been punished by the almighty" and said he "would have handled her on [his] own if the police were unable to."
- Seven LGBT activists listed on the blocked gay-hunting website have [called on](#) Russia's Investigative Committee to examine whether the website played a role in Grigoriyeva's killing.
- Supporters gathered in St. Petersburg on Tuesday evening to [hold](#) single-person pickets in honor of Grigoriyeva's memory.

What are activists saying?

- Fellow activists claim Grigoriyeva had regularly received death threats and reported them to the police, who did nothing to protect her before she was murdered.
- She "encountered a system unprepared, unable and unwilling to defend her," [said](#) rights campaigner and Grigoriyeva's friend Dinar Idrisov.
- "This could be hatred on grounds of political convictions, homophobia or a domestic dispute. Every lead needs to be considered, and those guilty found and punished," said Maxim Olenichev, a lawyer for the Vykhod LGBT rights group.
- "Yelena was killed because she was not afraid to tell the truth about the subjects that are traditionally silent in Russia and on the country's state television channels," demonstrator Marina Ken [told](#) The Associated Press.
- "She never concealed her orientation, and she was told she'd get killed for that," [recalled](#) Alexei Sergeyev, an activist with the Alliance of Heterosexuals and LGBT for Equal Rights.

What are the authorities saying?

- The St. Petersburg branch of Russia's Investigative Committee has [opened](#) a criminal case into murder.
- Grigoriyeva's death is being treated as the result of a domestic dispute and not a hate crime, an unnamed source familiar with the investigation [told](#) the Rosbalt.ru news website.

- Police said they had examined “multiple” complaints from Grigoriyeva, but [maintained](#) that they all concerned domestic disputes “and none of them concerned possible threats to the life of the victim.”

This story was updated on July 25, 2019, to add details about the detained suspect from the Investigative Committee's statement.

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