

Prominent Russian Journalist, Lawyer Attacked in Chechnya

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Novaya Gazeta reporter Yelena Milashina was the first journalist to report on alleged gay purges in the conservative, predominantly Muslim region in 2017. **Screenshot Youtube**

A group of men and women attacked an investigative journalist and a human rights lawyer in Russia's republic of Chechnya overnight, the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper which employs the journalist [said](#) Friday.

Yelena Milashina and lawyer Marina Dubrovina arrived in the Chechen capital of Grozny to attend the trial of a disabled blogger who was jailed after publishing a video of the alleged estate of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov's family. Milashina had broken the story of alleged gay purges in the conservative, predominantly Muslim region in 2017.

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Around 15 young men and women beat Milashina and Dubrovina in the lobby of the Grozny hotel where they were staying before midnight Thursday, Novaya Gazeta [reported](#).

“For the most part, it was the women who beat [Milashina and Dubrovina] with their hands and feet,” the newspaper said. “The assailants filmed their actions on camera.”

A photograph posted by Milashina online [showed](#) bruises on her forehead and nose. Doctors reportedly diagnosed the victims with soft-tissue bruising.

In a banner on its front page, Novaya Gazeta demanded that Kadyrov apologize for the beatings.

Last week, Kadyrov [labeled](#) Novaya Gazeta reporters who investigated alleged disappearances in Chechnya “devils.” He had also [called](#) Novaya Gazeta journalists “devils” in 2017 over their reporting on the alleged gay purges.

“This [attack] is, of course, a stubborn command by the Chechen authorities. I believe they are certainly behind this attack,” Milashina [told](#) the Ekho Moskvyy radio station.

Grozny's police force [said](#) it was inspecting the incident. Chechnya's top human rights official [called](#) the attack an “unpleasant incident designed primarily to mar the Chechen republic's image,” according to the state-run TASS news agency.

Russia's Union of Journalists and the Moscow Helsinki Group human rights organization [said](#) they were “[outraged](#)” by the attack on Milashina and Dubrovina.

The European security watchdog OSCE's media freedom representative has [called](#) on Russian authorities to investigate the attack. Russia's Committee Against Torture human rights organization [issued](#) a similar call.

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