

# Prominent Russian Journalist, Lawyer Attacked in Chechnya

February 07, 2020



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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