The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Gay Chechen Man Flees Russia After Months of Police Abuse – Rights Group

January 17, 2024



Rizvan Dadayev. **Video grab**

A gay Chechen man has fled Russia after spending months in police custody, where he faced abuse from law enforcement officials linked to Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, the North Caucasus LGBTQ+ rights group SK SOS announced Wednesday.

Rizvan Dadayev was detained in the summer of 2022 after a video circulated online where local extortionists forced him to admit he is gay, SK SOS told The Moscow Times. He had not been heard from since.

The SK SOS rights group learned that Dadayev was held in the basement of a police station in the Chechen capital of Grozny from late July to mid-November 2022.

"Dadayev, who was detained only because of his sexual orientation, was also beaten and tortured," it said.

Related article: How Russia's 2013 'Gay Propaganda' Law Catalyzed a Decade of Anti-LGBTQ+ Violence

Among those said to have abused Dadayev during his detention was a local police chief, who kicked him until he lost consciousness, according to SK SOS.

Dadayev identified the senior officer as the nephew of Kadyrov's wife, Deni Aydamirov, who was named Chechnya's Deputy Interior Minister in November.

The circumstances surrounding Dadayev's eventual release in November 2022 remain unclear.

SK SOS said police had told Dadayev that they were seeking to avoid a public outcry from LGBTQ+ activists, while his family credited Kadyrov's personal involvement in getting him released.

The rights group said Dadayev had contacted them through a friend last January, as he sought to leave Russia to avoid possibly being detained again.

"I currently live in Europe," Dadayev said in a video shared by SK SOS.

Credible reports have in recent years documented cases of large-scale arrests and violence toward individuals believed to be gay or lesbian in Russia's conservative and predominantly Muslim republic of Chechnya.

Kadyrov, who is under multiple U.S. sanctions for alleged human rights abuses, has for years maintained that "no gays" live in Chechnya.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/01/17/gay-chechen-man-flees-russia-after-months-of-police-abuse-rights-group-a83755