

Take Action with #EyesOnChechnya¹

In the years since the world first learned about the horrific anti-LGBTQ atrocities taking place in the Russian republic of Chechnya, HRC members have taken action to help put an end to the human rights violations.

From working with Congress to activating our membership and raising up our voices together, HRC has sent a clear message that we have our #EyesOnChechnya, the human rights violations must stop, the perpetrators must be held accountable, and the international community must recognize that this is a crime against humanity. The #EyesOnChechnya campaign is a partnership of the Human Rights Campaign and Human Rights First.

What can you do?

- 1 Learn More.** Our #EyesOnChechnya [background document](#) contains information about the situation in Chechnya. You can also keep up to date by subscribing to HRC's daily [A.M. Equality](#) email, and keeping up with our [blog](#) and our [website](#).
- 2 Speak Up.** Whether speaking to a co-worker or to your social media network, we must raise our voices and focus the world's attention on Chechnya. Below is sample social media language you can use to join the public outcry:
 - Twitter
 - ◆ For years, @realDonaldTrump and this White House have refused to publicly condemn the attacks against gay and bisexual men in Chechnya. Enough is enough. [#EyesOnChechnya](#).
 - Facebook
 - ◆ LGBTQ people in Chechnya have been detained, tortured and killed on suspicion of being gay or bisexual. Why are U.S. leaders silent in the face of these crimes against humanity? Take action today. [#EyesOnChechnya](#).
- 3 Support the Survivors.** HRC [has called on the U.S. government](#) to take in those fleeing the violence. However, to date, we are unaware of any Chechen LGBTQ refugees having been resettled in the U.S. HRC encourages people to donate to the [Russian LGBT Network](#), the Canadian-based international organization [Rainbow Railroad](#) or [ILGA-Europe](#), organizations which are doing critical work to help evacuate vulnerable people out of Chechnya to safety.

HRC's Ongoing Efforts

From the day the news broke about Chechnya's detentions and abuse of men suspected of being gay or bisexual, HRC has been in contact with advocates in Russia to better understand how we can support their efforts. After consultations with them and with coalition partners in the U.S., HRC has taken a number of actions:

- HRC launched its #EyesOnChechnya webpage and campaign, in partnership with Human Rights First, to help draw further attention to the issue.

¹ Published January 2020. This document will be updated as needed to reflect new actions and information.

- Just days after the news broke about the atrocities occurring in Chechnya, then-HRC president Chad Griffin sent a [letter](#) to then-U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson asking him to raise these human rights violations with the Russian government during his visit to the country that month.
- HRC has worked to bring visibility to the issue through statements by influencers like former U.S. Vice President [Joe Biden](#) and the [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum](#).
- HRC has called on [President Trump](#) and [the Secretary of State](#) to raise the crimes with their Russian counterparts, [urged the U.S. State Department](#) to provide visas to Chechen LGBTQ refugees, and [demanded that the State Department release a letter](#) that then-Secretary Tillerson sent to the Russian government.
- Within weeks, HRC sent out a [membership action email](#), asking HRC members to take action and urge President Trump to call on Russia to immediately stop the detention and murder of LGBTQ people in Chechnya. Thousands of HRC members responded.
- In May 2017, HRC joined together with Amnesty International and Human Rights First to stage a protest [rally](#) outside the Russian Ambassador's residence.
- The following week, HRC [penned an op-ed in The Advocate](#), calling further attention to the situation and connecting it with the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOTB) on May 17.
- HRC staff have also met repeatedly with officials at the U.S. State Department and the U.N. and urged them to take further steps.
- HRC staff worked closely with members of Congress on issuing and amplifying statements. Ultimately, working closely with HRC, the U.S. [House](#) and [Senate](#) each passed unanimous, bipartisan resolutions that condemned the atrocities; called on the Russian government to investigate the human rights violations and hold the perpetrators accountable; and called on the U.S. to condemn the violence and impose sanctions against the perpetrators. The U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions against two Chechen officials in December 2017.
- HRC joined a [Voices4Chechnya march](#) in New York City in October 2017, which began at the historic Stonewall Inn and ended at Trump Tower.
- In December 2017, HRC and Human Rights First [honored](#) Tatiana Vinnichenko and the Russian LGBT Network for their courageous work in helping Chechens to flee the violence at our annual Advocates and Allies event.
- Following HRC's advocacy to pass the Global Magnitsky Act through Congress in 2016, the U.S. government in December 2017 imposed Magnitsky sanctions against the head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, and one of his associates, Ayub Kataev.
- In March 2018, HRC launched a [campaign](#) marking the anniversary of the news first breaking about the atrocities in Chechnya, and called on the U.S. government and the world community to call the Chechen government's actions a crime against humanity.
- Then-HRC President Chad Griffin sent a [letter](#) to President Trump in March 2018 calling on him to condemn the atrocities in Chechnya and call them crimes against humanity.

- In June 2018, HRC [brought](#) a gay Chechen survivor along with Kimahli Powell, the executive director of [Rainbow Railroad](#), to Washington for meetings with key U.S. officials at the White House and State Department to address the ongoing crimes against humanity occurring in Chechnya. Later that month, on World Refugee Day, HRC [published a blog](#) by the Chechen survivor and hosted a [Twitter Takeover](#) with Kimahli in which he discussed his organization's important work and urged the U.S. government to welcome more refugees.
- In July 2018, on the eve of Trump and Putin's summit in Helsinki, Finland, [HRC projected images](#) onto Helsinki's Presidential Palace, calling on the two leaders to condemn the crimes against humanity in Chechnya and to initiate a serious investigation into the atrocities. The director of HRC Global, Ty Cobb, also [spoke at a rally](#) in Helsinki that day, calling on Trump to speak out.
- HRC [applauded](#) a report issued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that was authorized by 16 countries and which officially documented the crimes that took place in Chechnya.
- HRC [condemned](#) the Trump-Pence Administration for refusing to join a statement by UN member states that called for "a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged persecution," and that those responsible be held accountable.