



**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
**On Continued Reports of Gross  
Violations of Human Rights of LGBTI  
Persons by the Chechen Authorities**

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Michele Siders  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 12, 2017

The United States remains deeply concerned about the apparent lack of progress in the investigation of the numerous credible reports of a brutal campaign against gay men in Chechnya, and by apparent attempts by local authorities to cover up abuses that took place. Recent reporting by credible NGOs and media outlets highlighted such abuses during a recent visit of the Russian federal human rights ombudsman to Chechnya, conducted with the goal of investigating abuses against LGBTI persons as well as reports of a January mass execution. The reporting suggests that local authorities attempted to stage false meetings, cover up the real causes of death of victims, fabricate evidence to suggest that individuals who had been killed had instead gone to Syria, and strongly pressure victims' families to cease cooperation with the ombudsman.

We urge the government of the Russian Federation to investigate all of these reports of abuses, as well as the apparent cover up by local authorities. We also urge Russia to take decisive steps to ensure that all in Chechnya are afforded the human rights protections enshrined in Russian law, including the Russian constitution, and in Russia's international human rights obligations. We ask the Russian Federation to clarify: is there an ongoing federal-level investigation into these reports? If so, when do you anticipate the investigation to conclude, and will the results be made public? We will continue to raise our concerns until the Russian Federation provides this Council with a serious response.

It is wrong when government authorities ignore or condone violence against LGBTI individuals. It is immeasurably worse when authorities incite or commit the violence, or engage in cover-ups. Very regrettably, violence against LGBTI persons is widespread within our OSCE community, and we all must condemn and combat it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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