EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES CALL FOR IMMEDIATE END TO LGBT PERSECUTION IN CHECHNYA

Friday 14 April, 2017

We have all heard of the insidious campaign of kidnap, interrogation, torture and killing of gay men in the Chechen Republic and as reports develop, the full horror is becoming only too clear. The Chechen Republic is a conservative, federal Russian subject in the Northern Caucasus which is presided over by a Putin-backed leader, Ramzan Kadyrov.

Human Rights Advocate and Member of the Equality Council, Rob McDowall ***(31)*** believes the international community must pressurise Russia to halt the commission of these crimes against humanity. *'It is clear we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg, gay men are being beaten and electrocuted by the Chechen authorities in order to solicit the names of other gay people and associates. Another dimension to these reports are of gay men, outed by the authorities, being murdered by their families in so-called 'honour killings'. These men are being kidnapped and detained in secret prisons with the intention of interrogating and torturing them to allow the Republic to jettison its LGBT community.*

The notion of human rights and equality in the Chechen Republic is a pipe-dream and history shows us many examples of the Chechen regime's complete and utter disregard for even the most basic human rights protections. What we are seeing in Chechnya are crimes against humanity, pure and simply; the international community need to act in unison and put pressure on Russia to have the Chechens halt the commission of these crimes now! These men have no time left, they don't have time for us to drag our feet. The eyes of the world are watching!'

Vice Chair of the Leicester LGBT Centre, Mathew Hulbert ***(37)*** said *'The Leicester LGBT Centre have been horrified to learn of the state-sponsored persecution, torture and death of Gay men in the Russian republic of Chechnya.*

Amnesty International is calling for an immediate end to the abduction, persecution and killing of people in Chechnya because of their sexuality or perceived sexuality. We stand with LGBT+ communities in Chechnya and join the increasing number of voices, here in the UK and internationally, calling for an end to the persecution and violence.

This is a salutary reminder of the very real threat faced by many LGBT+ people in all too many parts of the world, just for who they love and who they are. As an LGBT Centre in a proudly internationalist and multi-cultural city like Leicester, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all LGBT+ communities around the world and call for an immediate end to any and all persecution of our communities. We stand for love, peace, inclusion, diversity and celebrate our common humanity, as well as what makes us unique.' (1)

Scottish LGBT Advocate, Lee Martin ***(20)*** added '*The news coming out of Chechnya is extremely alarming. Gay men are being brutally attacked just for being themselves. Everyone should stand up for LGBT people in Chechnya and around the world in condemning this barbaric action.*'

Editor notes

1. Full statement by Mathew Hulbert available online at http://allequal.xyz/mhLGBT,
2. Rob McDowall, is a Member of the Equality Council and is disabled human rights and anti-poverty advocate from Glasgow and tweets @robmcd85,
3. Mathew Hulbert is Vice Chair of the Leicester LGBT Centre and former Liberal Democrat Borough Councillor and tweets @HulbertMathew,
4. Lee Martin is a Scottish LGBT advocate from Dumbarton in Scotland and tweets at @LeeMartin113,

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