



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN®

March 29, 2018

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

It has now been a year since the world learned of the horrific state-sponsored attacks on men suspected of being gay or bisexual in the Russian republic of Chechnya. Yet over the last year, you have remained unconscionably silent in the face of these atrocities, despite the fact that human rights organizations have repeatedly called on you to speak out, and other global leaders have condemned the atrocities. Enough is enough. It is time to break your silence and condemn these atrocities as crimes against humanity.

Early last year, Chechen authorities began targeting a group of men they believed to be gay or bisexual. The atrocities included a horrifying array of human rights abuses, such as forcible detentions, torture and extrajudicial executions. Meanwhile, the Chechen government denied that any human rights abuses were taking place there, asserting that gay and bisexual people did not exist in their republic, though they simultaneously encouraged family members to carry out “honor killings” against suspected gay or bisexual relatives.

These atrocities constitute crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines crimes against humanity as certain acts committed as part of “a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population.” We believe that the human rights abuses that have taken place in Chechnya over the last year are exactly that. They have been both systemic and widespread, and it is clear that Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has explicitly condoned these attacks as part of his efforts to “purify Chechen blood.”

It is therefore no surprise that both the U.S. House and the Senate spoke out against these crimes by passing bipartisan resolutions that condemned the attacks, called for investigations and urged our government to sanction the perpetrators of these crimes.

It is important that the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions against the president of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, and one of his associates, Ayub Kataev.

There is much more that needs to be done. None of the perpetrators have been brought to justice. Russia has refused to launch an investigation, and those who carried out these abuses face no repercussions for their actions. Their impunity is especially problematic: since there are no consequences for their actions, others could be led to believe that they too will receive no punishment should they choose to do the same.

While it is long past time for you to speak out, it is not too late. You must condemn these crimes against humanity and call on Russia to conduct an investigation and hold the perpetrators accountable.

With deep concern,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chad Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chad Griffin, President

CC: Vice President Mike Pence