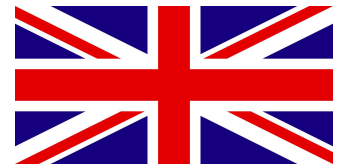


Topic: Concentration Camps for LGBT People in Chechnya
Committee: Human Rights Council (HRC)
Country: United Kingdom
School: American School Foundation
Delegate: Alejandra Díaz-Pizarro Perdomo



The United Kingdom is a relatively safe country for the LGBT community, having been rated with an 86% by ILGA-Europe in 2015 in terms of “respect [for] human rights and full equality”¹. The UK also has instated several laws and policies that protect its LGBT citizens, such as the Equality Act 2010, which addressed discrimination in the workplace and in society² for a variety of minorities, the LGBT community among them, and established equality as a statutory right. Regarding the issue at hand, while not directly affected by it, the UK was quick to denounce the situation in Chechnya as “utterly despicable”, in the words of deputy Foreign Secretary Sir Alan Duncan. He also called on the Chechen and Russian authorities to investigate the matter and bring the perpetrators to justice, saying that “this would be in accordance with international human rights commitments adopted by the Russian government to respect the human rights of all individuals.”³ Sir Duncan also spoke directly to Russian Foreign Secretary Vladimir Titov in April to challenge the country on its lack of action towards the issue, and British representatives have reportedly done the same in dialogue with other Russian functionaries. Therefore, not only has Britain taken a clear stance against the detention and torture of gay men in Chechnya, but it has also taken steps in an attempt to end it.

The UN, thus far, has failed to undertake a direct action plan to solve this issue. It has, however, made statements on the matter, calling on the Russian Federation to “proceed with the immediate release of everyone unlawfully detained in the Republic of Chechnya”⁴, to further investigate the matter, and to hold those involved accountable. The UN has repeatedly urged the Russian and Chechen governments to take action, and is concerned with their reluctance to put an end to it. While LGBT rights are a relatively new topic for the UN, the Human Rights Council has adopted several resolutions and published reports in the past seven years that address the need for equality. The first, Report A/HRC/19/41 (2011)⁵, was commissioned by resolution A/HRC/RES/17/19 (2011)⁶, and focused on how the law in certain countries still penalized LGBT individuals but not those who discriminated them, encouraging these nations to change this. Resolution A/HRC/RES/27/32 (2014)⁷ took note of the report and chose to update it

¹ "United Kingdom." *ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2015* (2015): 168-71. *ILGA-Europe*. ILGA-Europe, Dec. 2015. Web. 28 Oct. 2017.

² "Equality Act 2010: Guidance." *GOV.UK*. Government Equalities Office of the United Kingdom, 27 Feb. 2013. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

³ Butterworth, Benjamin. "British Government Calls Abuse of Gay Men in Chechnya 'Utterly Barbaric'." *PinkNews*. N.p., 20 Apr. 2017. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

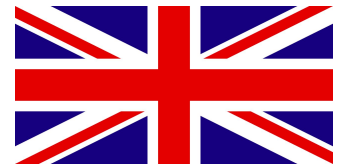
⁴ "End Abuse and Detention of Gay Men in Chechnya, UN Human Rights Experts Tell Russia." *OHCHR*. Human Rights Council, 13 Apr. 2017. Web. 28 Oct. 2017.

⁵ "A/HRC/19/41." *Resolutions of the Human Rights Council* (2011): n. pag. *United Nations Document Database*. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

⁶ "A/HRC/RES/17/19." *Resolutions of the Human Rights Council* (2011): n. pag. *United Nations Document Database*. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

⁷ "A/HRC/RES/27/32." *Resolutions of the Human Rights Council* (2014): n. pag. *United Nations Document Database*. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

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regularly. Lastly, resolution A/HRC/RES/32/2 (2016)⁸ reaffirmed the rights of everyone and everyone's status as a human being, while also appointing an "independent expert" with a mandate of three years and the responsibility to raise awareness, establish dialogue, and provide services of assistance and capacity-building. The United Kingdom voted in favor of all three of the aforementioned resolutions.

The UK sees the wider issue as divided into three more specific problems: the lack of accountability, the lack of veracity and clarity, and the lack of safety for the persecuted men. For the first, it would suggest that the UN establish dialogue with Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and Russian president Vladimir Putin to get them to admit responsibility and be able to hold them accountable for their actions, which could potentially entail economic sanctions or even jail time. Should this be ineffective, the UK would also suggest partnering with the International Criminal Court to bring these leaders to justice for their human rights violations. For the second, the UK would recommend that the Human Rights Council conduct an International Commission of Inquiry to put forward a truly accurate perspective of the issue. This is within HRC powers, and a better scope is a good parting point for further, more specific solutions: precise information is vital to proceed. For this, the HRC would send officers to Chechnya and, more specifically, the city of Argun (reportedly the largest of the camps) and create a safe space for witnesses and anonymous testifiers to relate their experiences. Lastly, for the third problem, the UK would suggest the deployment of the "Blue Helmets" in the region to liberate imprisoned men and take them back to safety. This second part, however, can only be made possible if other countries open their doors to gay men fleeing Chechnya and those liberated by the UN, granting them refugee status or the means to reintegrate themselves into that country's society. Countries such as Canada⁹ and Lithuania have been welcoming Chechen refugees, demonstrating that this is an existing possibility. The UK believes that accountability, veracity, and safety are the three keys to the solution of the issue, and upholds its stance against the violation of the LGBT community's rights and in favor of equality.

⁸ "A/HRC/RES/32/2." Resolutions of the Human Rights Council (2016): n. pag. United Nations Document Database. Web. 22 Oct. 2017.

⁹ Porter, Catherine. "Chechnya's Persecuted Gays Find Refuge in Canada." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 03 Sept. 2017. Web. 28 Oct. 2017.