



Plenary sitting

B8-0109/2019

12.2.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Chechnya and the case of Oyub Titiev
(2019/2562(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

B8-0109/2019

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Chechnya and the case of Oyub Titiev
(2019/2562(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Chechnya, in particular its resolutions of 8 February 2018 on Russia, the case of Oyub Titiev and the Human Rights Centre Memorial, and of 18 May 2017 on the implementation of the Council’s LGBTI Guidelines, particularly in relation to the persecution of (perceived) homosexual men in Chechnya, Russia,
- having regard to the statement by the Chairs of Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs and Subcommittee on Human Rights of 12 January 2018 calling for the immediate release of human rights defender Oyub Titiev,
- having regard to the EU statement of 19 January 2018 on human rights violations concerning the Memorial Human Rights Centre in Russia and to the statements by the EEAS Spokesperson of 11 January 2018 on the detention of the Director of the Memorial Human Rights Centre in the Chechen Republic and of 27 June 2018 on the cases of Russian human rights defenders Oyub Titiev and Yuri Dmitriev,
- having regard to the statements by the EEAS Spokesperson of 18 January 2019 on the persecution, torture and killing of LGBTI persons in Chechnya, and of 6 April 2017 on the human rights abuses of gay men in Chechnya,
- having regard to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which provide that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to which the Russian Federation is a party,
- having regard to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- having regard to the OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations and Impunity in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation of 20 December 2018,

- having regard to the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 27 June 2018 on the persecution of LGBTI people in the Chechen Republic,
- having regard to the statement of 13 April 2017 issued by UN human rights experts on the abuse and detention of gay men in Chechnya,
- having regard to the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
- having regard to the European Council Guidelines of 24 June 2013 to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons,
- having regard to Rule 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. Whereas the Russian Federation, as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, has committed itself to the principles of democracy, rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights;
 - B. Whereas the Russian Federation’s international commitments include the obligation to protect human rights defenders;
 - C. Whereas Chechnya has experienced a dramatic deterioration in the human rights situation over the past years which effectively prevents independent journalists and human rights activists from continuing their work without putting their own lives and the lives of their family members, friends and colleagues at risk;
 - D. Whereas Oyub Titiev, director of the Chechnya office of Memorial Human Rights Centre, was arrested on 9 January 2018 and charged with drug possession; whereas these accusations have been denied by Oyub Titiev and denounced by other NGOs and human rights defenders as fabricated and as an attempt to obstruct his and his organisation’s work on human rights;
 - E. Whereas the courts extended the detention of Oyub Titiev several times until court hearings started on 19 July 2018; whereas the verdict is imminent and expected for mid-February 2019;
 - F. Whereas Oyub Titiev’s family has faced harassment and threats coercing them to leave their homes and Chechnya; whereas Memorial has been targeted by other actions in 2018, including an arson attack against its offices in Ingushetia on 17 January 2018, an attack on Mr Titiev’s lawyer’s car in Dagestan on 22 January 2018 and against the head of the Memorial office in Dagestan on 28 March 2018; whereas since the murder in 2009 of Oyub Titiev’s predecessor as director of the Chechnya office of Memorial, Natalia Estemirova, the perpetrators of this crime have still not been brought to justice;
 - G. Whereas Memorial is one of the last remaining organisations that continue their work on human rights in Chechnya, namely to document and expose human rights

violations, to assist victims of such violations and help them seek justice; whereas Memorial was awarded the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2009;

- H. Whereas Chechen officials have repeatedly denounced the work of human rights defenders and have failed to publically condemn threats of violence against them, thereby creating and perpetuating a climate of impunity for the perpetrators of acts of violence against human rights defenders;
- I. Whereas there have been renewed reports in December 2018 about persecution of LGBTI and allegedly LGBTI people in Chechnya similar to the reported abductions, detentions, ill-treatment and torture of LGBTI people in April 2017;
1. Strongly condemns the repeated public statements by Chechen officials denouncing the work of human rights defenders and organisations or targeting specific persons as well as their failure to publically condemn and investigate threats and acts of violence against them;
 2. Expresses its deep concerns over a worrying trend of arrests, attacks and intimidations of journalists, human rights defenders and their supporters as well as ordinary citizens that appear to be part of coordinated campaigns;
 3. Urges the authorities, both of the Republic of Chechnya and of the Russian Federation, to end the persecution of its citizens and the climate of impunity for perpetrators of acts of violence against human rights defenders, their family members, colleagues and supporters;
 4. Calls on the Russian Federation to protect all its citizens in full respect of their human rights and to honour its international commitments to respect the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms and human rights of its citizens, including of those that dedicate their time, resources and work at defending their fellow citizens' rights;
 5. Calls for the immediate release of Oyub Titiev, director of the Memorial Human Rights Centre office in Chechnya, who was detained on 9 January 2018 and accused of illegal acquisition and possession of drugs and is expected to receive his verdict by mid-February 2019; urges the Chechen authorities to ensure full respect for Oyub Titiev's human and legal rights, including his right to a fair trial, unhindered access to his lawyer and to medical care, and protection from judicial harassment and criminalisation;
 6. Calls for an immediate end to the arrests of human rights defenders in Chechnya on the grounds of fabricated accusations, to attacks on their colleagues and family members and intimidations of their supporters, which appear to serve the aim of impeding and ultimately ending the legitimate and useful work of their organisations;
 7. Expresses its utmost concern about the recent reports of a renewed persecution since December 2018, of arbitrary detention and torture of at least 40 persons perceived to be LGBTI in Chechnya;
 8. Calls on the Russian authorities to put an immediate hold to any further persecution of

LGBTI person, to release those detained and to ensure protection for the victims and their human rights defenders as well as journalists reporting about their case;

9. Calls on the Russian authorities to swiftly carry out full, effective and transparent official investigations into the reported persecution, torture and killings of LGBTI people in Chechnya and to bring those found guilty or complicit in these crimes to justice;
10. Repeats its call on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to continue closely monitoring the human rights situation in Chechnya, to call for an immediate halt of these violations of human rights in relevant meetings with Russian representatives and to continue offering swift and efficient assistance to the victims of persecution and their family members, including when dealing with asylum requests;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, and the Chechen authorities.