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AMENDED CONSENT CALENDAR

May
30th, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Kriss Worthington, **Lori Droste, Cheryl Davila, and Sophie Hahn**

Subject: Resolution Condemning Chechnya's Violence Against Gay Men

RECOMMENDATION

Pass a resolution denouncing the systematic detention and torture of gay men in Chechnya under President Ramazan Kadyrov.

BACKGROUND

Starting this April, reports began emerging that Chechen President Kadyrov had ordered the detention of gay men in Chechnya, Russia. Novaya Gazeta, an independent Russian newspaper, reported up to 100 people have been sent to secret prisons where they were tortured, and at least 3 killed. One survivor told the the New York Times that he was beaten, electrocuted and interrogated about who he was dating.

Tanya Lokshina, the Russian program director for Human Rights Watch, said that some of the men imprisoned returned to their families "barely alive from beatings."

Berkeley is a city known for its spirit of tolerance and inclusion, a place that speaks up against injustices that occur all over the world. At a time when the world is turning towards hatred and fear, we must stand on the side of those who need protection the most. We condemn the recent actions in Chechnya and urge the immediate release of all gay men who remain in detention, along with a swift investigation into these crimes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Consistent with environmental goals

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/03/opinion/chechnyas-anti-gay-pogrom.html?_r=0
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/21/world/europe/chechnya-russia-attacks-gays.html>
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/04/anti-lgbt-violence-chechnya>

CONTACT PERSON:

Resolution condemning ~~concentration camps~~ secret prisons for gay people in Chechnya

WHEREAS, According to Novaya Gazeta under President Ramazan Kadyrov's regime 100 people have been detained and at least 3 killed,

WHEREAS, Human Rights Watch has confirmed reports by the independent Russian outlet of human rights abuses against people suspected of being gay including torture and detention,

WHEREAS, former Vice President Joe Biden has called upon the current presidential administration to directly confront Russia about these human rights abuses,

WHEREAS, the State Department has released a statement condemning the treatment of gay men in Chechnya and urging the Russian government to conduct an independent investigation and hold the perpetrators responsible,

WHEREAS, President Ramazan Kadyrov's administration has denied reports of such persecution saying "You cannot arrest or repress people who don't exist in the Republic", similar to a statement given by former Iranian President Ahmadinejad who insisted there were "no gays in Iran" another country where the LGBT community faces marginalization,

WHEREAS, Berkeley stands for human rights whether they be at home or across the world and welcomes anyone regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identification, race, or religion.

Therefore, be it resolved that Berkeley condemns the systematic persecution of gay men in Chechnya and joins the U.S State Department in calling on Russia to launch an investigation and ensure those responsible are brought to justice.