

First Chechen to Come Out as Gay Apologizes on Local TV

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Movsar Eskershanov (r) / Screenshot Grozny TV

The first Chechen man to come out as gay has apologized on television in the restive Russian region and now claims he was set up.

Televised apologies by Chechens who criticize the republic's leader Ramzan Kadyrov [are](#) a regular occurrence in the Muslim-majority North Caucasus republic. Human Right Watch [reported](#) last year that several Chechens who went against the authorities were later forced to publicly apologize to the Chechen leadership.

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A post shared by ЧГТРК "Грозный" (@groznytv) on Nov 13, 2017 at 8:12am PST

Movsar Eskarkhanov told Time magazine in September that he fled Chechnya for Germany twice to escape persecution. He faced deportation in Germany after authorities rejected his last appeal for asylum in early September.

His account of followed an investigative newspaper's report in April 2017 of a large-scale crackdown on gay men unleashed in Chechnya. The independent Novaya Gazeta daily [alleged](#) that more than 100 men were detained and tortured in a special prison earlier this year.

This week, BBC's Russian service cited a Chechen state television interview announcement in which Eskakhanov claims he was framed by western journalists.

"They disgraced me before the Chechen people and the Chechen leader, I was framed," Eskarkhanov is cited as saying.

"That's why I apologize to the residents of Chechnya, the leadership of Chechnya, the Chechens living in the North Caucasus and Europe."

Eskarkhanov explains that his coming-out was made under the influence of epilepsy medication.

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