

Public

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical team / Europe Program
Date: 2 October 2002

MEDICAL ACTION

Vasily Stetsik: human rights activist held in psychiatric hospital Russian Federation

Key words psychiatric confinement / ill-treatment

Amnesty International's concerns

Vasily Michaelovich Stetsik has been held in psychiatric hospitals since the end of 1998, without him or his family receiving any information on the reason for his detention. Neither he nor his family have been given a diagnosis of his condition. Amnesty International received information that he may have been given medication which has had a damaging influence on his health.

Vasily Stetsik was arrested in April 1998. He was charged with attempted murder and taken to pre-trial detention centre Butyrka in Moscow. He stated that he was severely beaten and placed in a cold, damp cell with no bedding, food and medical treatment for two weeks. Amnesty International was told that a former fellow cell mate in Butyrka said that Vasily Stetsik would tell those held with him in the cell about their rights, and would advise them on how and to whom to submit complaints. A prison psychiatrist reportedly decided to move him to a cell for people with a mental illness, in response to his 'inadequate behaviour in the general cell'. In December 1998 he was moved to a psychiatric hospital in the Smolensk region from where he was removed in November 2001 to a closed psychiatric hospital in Orenburg region where he remains until today.

Prior to his arrest, Vasily Stetsik was working as an editor-in-chief of the journal "The Truth about Human Rights" in the town of Novotroitsk. The journal reportedly regularly contained stories critical of the authorities. Further reports indicated that the editorial office had been attacked on a number of occasions, computers were stolen and the publication was disrupted. Vasily Stetsik traveled to Moscow to complain about violations of his human rights. He was arrested in a court room in Moscow where he tried to pursue his case.

Recommended actions & addresses

Please write letters in English to the Ministry of Health, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- explaining that you are writing on behalf of Vasily Mikhailovich Stetsik, held in regional psychiatric hospital No 2 in Orenburg region;

- enquiring after his current health and any diagnosis of mental illness that has been made;
- asking for details of his treatment and prognosis;
- asking on what charges Vlasily Mikhailovich Stetsik is being held.

Address

Minister of Health
Yurii Leonidovich Shevchenko
Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
Rakhmanovskii Pereulok 3
101431
Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax:007 095 928 58 15
e-mail: minzdrav@cnt.ru

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s). Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 26 November 2002, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Monitoring of action

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter-writing actions. If you write one, two, three or more letters, please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write

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Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org Thank you.