To: Health professional coordinators

From: Medical team / Europe and Central Asia program

Date: 19 December 2002

Further information on

MEDICAL ACTION

Vasily Stetsik released from psychiatric hospital

Russian Federation

(see original action: Vasily Stetsik: human rights activist held in psychiatric hospital, 2 October 2002, EUR 46/017/2002)

Key words   psychiatric confinement / ill-treatment

Release of Vasily Stetsik

Vasily Stetsik was released from a psychiatric hospital on 6 November 2002. He had been held in psychiatric hospitals since the end of 1998 without receiving information why he was held and without being diagnosed.

In a letter to an Amnesty International staff member Vasily Stetsik wrote:

> *"Many thanks to you and your friends from AI for taking an interest in my fate and the fate of my family. You supported us in a difficult time for us and now, in the end I have been released from the psychiatric hospital. Now I am free after all these years of imprisonment, ill-treatment, torture and scorn upon me. Thank you for everything".*

Background information

Vasily Stetsik was arrested in 1998 and reportedly ill-treated. Amnesty International was told that a former fellow cell mate in pre-trial detention centre 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'.

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.

Recommendations

No further action is requested on Vasily Stetsik's behalf. Many thanks for all appeals.