

# **THE RETURN OF POLITICAL ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY IN RUSSIA**

Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction to the September 2021 report</u>	4
<u>Current cases</u>	7
<u>Crimean Tatars</u>	39
<u>Psychiatric Departments of Labor Camp Hospitals</u>	40
<u>Forced Sterilization of Mentally Ill Women</u>	42

# Foreword

## Robert van Voren

When we received the first reports on post-Soviet political abuse of psychiatry in August 1996, we managed to organize a swift response. At that time the World Congress of Psychiatry of the World Psychiatric Association convened in Madrid, and we had been able to bring 75 mental health stakeholders to the congress, including many Presidents of newly established independent psychiatric associations, their first time ever presence at a World Congress. In response to the reports we quickly managed to draw up an appeal to the authorities in Turkmenistan, where the cases took place, and the statement was signed by all psychiatric associations represented, including the Russian Society of Psychiatrists.

Although we understood at that time that undoing the effects of forty years of totalitarian Soviet psychiatry would take a long time, we really believed that the political abuse of psychiatry was a matter of the past. In both cases we were wrong. Undoing the destructive policies of the Soviet psychiatric nomenclatura, that not only allowed the profession to be used as a tool of repression but also led to the ostracization of ten million Soviet citizens by putting them on the psychiatric register, turned out to be a long lasting struggle. In many countries reform has hardly begun, thirty years after the disintegration of the USSR. In others it stranded due to resistance by authorities, society and sometimes the psychiatric profession, and in only few countries real structural progress has been made.

As to the political abuse of psychiatry, we were very wrong as well. Understanding that abuse of psychiatry for political purposes is not limited to the former Soviet space but can and does take place in other countries as well, including affluent Western European countries, there is no doubt that the scale of the abuse is particularly high in socialist or former socialist countries. There are various reasons for this which are beyond the scope of this report. In Soviet times, the leadership of Soviet psychiatry consisted mainly of psychiatrists based in Moscow, many of them being collaborators with the KGB, some even outright KGB agents. They dominated the profession, and after lying low for a while in the 1990s they gradually regained their power and took control of psychiatry in their country. Much more reform-minded psychiatric circles in, for instance, St. Petersburg and Siberia, were sidelined or suppressed. Making use of the increasing dominance of Vladimir Putin and his inner-circle in Russian politics, they eventually regained a virtually unlimited control over the profession.

The deteriorating climate in Russia led to an atmosphere in which local authorities felt free to use the “psychiatric route” again, to rid themselves of bothersome or too popular political opponents. What started out as a sequence of individual cases of political abuse of psychiatry led to a more systematic form, different than in Soviet times but equally disturbing, as Victor Davidoff shows in this new report. This is the fourth report we publish, and regrettably every report published paints a worse picture than the previous one.

Although the overwhelming majority of Russian psychiatrists have no involvement in these abuses (yet), the leadership of Russian psychiatry remains completely silent and is thus becoming an accomplice in this perversion of the psychiatric profession. And again, like in the 1970s when the political abuse of psychiatry in the USSR started to dominate the agenda of the World Psychiatric Association demanding action on their part, the question before us is, how to respond and how to make sure that these abuses come to an end. If we don't act now, we might back soon back to a similar situation as in the 1970s and 1980s, when one third or more of political prisoners were languishing in psychiatric hospitals.

# Introduction to the September 2021 report

**Viktor Davidoff**

2021 marks exactly 100 years since a political regime in Russia first accepted psychiatry as an instrument of oppression. Indeed, the oldest known document about the forced internment of a political opposition figure in a psychiatric hospital is dated 1921.

Since then, several political regimes have come and gone in Russia. Yet aside from a few brief intervals, psychiatry continues to be used for political purposes and “social engineering”. In 1971, Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky enumerated the reasons why psychiatry is a convenient instrument of repression for authorities. These include:

- A simplified judicial procedure. A person can be placed in a psychiatric hospital either without any charges at all or through an extremely reduced criminal trial: arguments on the merit of the charges are not reviewed; the conclusion of the government forensic psychiatric evaluation cannot be contested; and the judicial proceeding can take place in the absence of the defendant.
- The period of stay in a psychiatric facility is not limited by law.
- Incarceration takes place under conditions of strict isolation: contacts with lawyers and family are restricted; statements and complaints by the prisoner are not reviewed by government agencies.
- Painful medications with destructive effects on the body and mind are routinely administered. As political regimes became more repressive during the Soviet era, cases of forced hospitalizations grew more and more frequent. And while this type of political repression was declared unlawful during the period of perestroika, such abuses continue today. Indeed, “latent schizophrenia,” a condition deliberately invented by Soviet psychiatrists in order to persecute dissidents, is still listed as an official mental illness in Russia. Any healthy person, especially a patient with autism, may be diagnosed this way, even without any symptoms at all.

At present, several methods of punitive psychiatry have been observed in Russia:

- The most widespread form continues to be involuntary hospitalization of citizens in psychiatric hospitals through administrative procedures without filing legal charges. The police detain members of the opposition, civic activists, bloggers, and ordinary citizens who complain about the authorities’ abuses, or who try to combat corruption, after which a court rules to hospitalize them involuntarily for a minimum period of one month. Later, a court often extends that term.

The court’s decision to hospitalize a person is based solely on police records; witnesses are not summoned to court, and usually, the trial takes place without a lawyer’s involvement. Formally, the court is supposed to summon the accused, but that is not always done. A particularly serious rights violation occurs when a hospitalized person – usually someone already in a psychiatric institution – is given an injection of a strong psychotropic medication in advance of his hearing. As a result, he cannot participate adequately nor

perceive what is happening. In the opinion of one lawyer, “a commission made up of three doctors writes whatever they like in a conclusion; a person is pumped up with sedatives to the point where he is drooling, and in such a state he is brought to court. The judge looks at him and makes a decision to hospitalize him.” The procedure itself happens very quickly – in one case, according to the official audio recording, the court ruled in favor of involuntary hospitalization within three minutes and 27 seconds. As a result, the female defendant was detained for more than eight months.

Cases of involuntary hospitalization without medical grounds have become so frequent that even the government news agency RIA Novosti reported on it. In January 2020, they published material describing several cases of unjustified hospitalizations (the last names and places of residence of the victims were omitted). In one case, a 64-year-old woman spent a week in the Alekseyev Psychiatric Hospital in Moscow after she complained that the police refused to investigate the theft of her belongings. In another case, a 26-year-old woman from Karelia sought psychiatric help, but when she demanded to be discharged, the psychiatrists appealed, and the woman spent a year in the hospital (after which she was released to ambulatory care).

As a lawyer familiar with the practice of involuntary hospitalizations stated, “decisions about involuntary hospitalization at the Gatchina City Court (Leningrad Region) are literally churned out; 20-30 of such cases are heard a day, and 10 minutes are spent on each one, no more.”

There are also cases of police officers themselves being forcibly hospitalized at the behest of their colleagues when they have a work conflict with their superiors. In such cases, instead of resolving the issue, the police chiefs send the officer for involuntary treatment at a psychiatric facility, after which he is fired “on medical grounds.”

- The courts may also order involuntary psychiatric treatment for suspects in politically motivated criminal cases. Usually, this is done when the substance of the charge is difficult to prove in an ordinary judicial procedure, when there is insufficient evidence, or when there are additional factors. For example, people detained for resisting police during opposition demonstrations may be interned and severely beaten. One case is known when the suspect was tortured by electro-shock, after which he confessed (and then subsequently retracted his confession).

- The ordering of an in-patient forensic psychiatric evaluation is often assigned without justification in politically motivated criminal cases. During the evaluation, the accused is held in a special wing of a strict-regimen psychiatric hospital, and the evaluation period may be increased up to 90 days. The living conditions in these institutions are extremely dangerous; patients are usually suspects in criminal cases who have severe psychiatric problems and are often aggressive. The accused must remain in the hospital for the entire period of the evaluation, unable to leave the premises, with their contacts restricted. Often, even before any diagnosis is given or a ruling is made regarding fitness to stand trial, large doses of neuroleptic drugs are administered.

An especially egregious violation of the rights of the accused is ordering an in-patient evaluation when a person is charged under articles of the Criminal Code that do not provide for imprisonment. In such cases, even if the court pronounces the accused guilty and imposes sanctions, the accused has essentially spent the entire period of evaluation under illegal confinement.

Furthermore, investigators have been known to use the threat of psychiatric evaluation for their own purposes. Cases have been documented when an investigator has openly threatened a suspect with an examination if he does not confess his guilt.

- Involuntary hospitalization of prisoners in psychiatric wings of labor camp (prison) hospitals is also a common abuse. Inmates who have systematically complained to state agencies and the media about the abuse of prisoners, forced heavy labor, and torture, often wind up placed there. These institutions remain extremely secretive, and access is restricted both for lawyers and members of the Public Monitoring Commissions. Large doses of neuroleptics are given to patients without justification. Patients spend a long time – days, weeks, even months – tied to cots and have no opportunity to complain or appeal to state agencies.
- The forced sterilization of women in psychiatric institutions has also been known to occur. This practice, like the Nazi program to sterilize women of “inferior races,” is used on women in facilities for the disabled as well. Patients – in one case, a pregnant woman – are sent from the psychiatric institution to a hospital for the operation without any explanation. These women are often threatened and forced to sign their consent for the “voluntary” procedure. At the present time, only one psychiatric facility is known to have used this practice, but there is every reason to suspect that it is being implemented at other hospitals.
- There have also been cases of using psychiatry to “cure” homosexuality. Usually, parents send their adolescent children to psychiatrists, and the teenagers themselves cannot legally refuse such “treatment”.

Although the use of punitive psychiatry is clearly a continuation of Soviet-era practices which used judicial and medical means to silence dissenting voices, it is worth noting the differences between this type of coercion in the USSR and contemporary Russia.

A law passed in 1992, still in force with some amendments, mandates that a judicial decision is necessary to impose involuntary hospitalization, although criminal charges are not required. If in the USSR, statements from the police (who usually acted on KGB orders) were sufficient for involuntary hospitalization, now such an act involves administrative proceedings and a court ruling. While the decision depends exclusively on one judge's opinion, many judges are aware of the criticism of the misuse of psychiatry in the USSR and do not believe that they should take part in continuing it. Another important distinction is that a judicial decision may be appealed to a higher court, thus complicating the procedure. This may motivate some judges to dismiss cases without prejudice, rather than getting drawn into prolonged court hearings that can go on for months.

Another very important factor is glasnost or publicity via a few independent media outlets and social media networks that can still express opinions freely. Thanks to these channels, psychiatric abuses can become widely known almost instantly. Moreover, history has shown that when an involuntary hospitalization becomes public, followed by protest actions, the court's decision is either reversed by a higher court or the person hospitalized is released from the psychiatric hospital before the court-imposed term.

These precedents suggest that shining a light on cases of punitive psychiatry in contemporary Russia, especially when it leads to international outcry, can halt the further deterioration of citizens' rights, even in the absence of an independent judiciary. Publicity and protests may indeed be the keys to defending political opponents from repressive abuse and the arbitrary deprivation of freedom in psychiatric institutions.

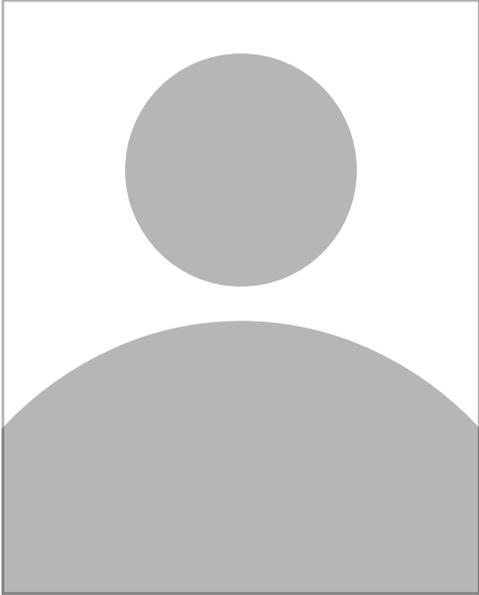


# ANATOLY BOLTYKHOV

**Anatoly Boltykhov, from Volgograd, was a participant in the opposition movement Artpodgotovka [Bombardment] and was hospitalized involuntarily on November 17, 2017. Police officers detained Boltykhov near his home; the basis for his detention was suspicion of theft of an automobile battery (no charges were officially filed).**

A team from the psychiatric emergency service was summoned to the police department, and after talking with Boltykhov, the medics left without explanation. But after a while, another emergency team arrived and took Boltykhov to a psychiatric hospital. At the ER admissions, a doctor spent a long time trying to determine why Boltykhov had been brought there, and police reported that when detained he had “behaved inappropriately,” and spoke about “seizing power,” after which Boltykhov was hospitalized.

On November 22, a court hearing took place, and the judge ruled that Boltykhov should be involuntarily hospitalized. The court based its decision on the emergency physician’s conclusion, where Boltykhov was given the preliminary diagnosis of “schizotypal disorder.” However, Shulepin, chair of the psychiatric commission, reported that she believes Boltykhov was quite sane and recommended a psychiatric examination without hospitalization. A month later, a hearing was held at a regional court, which upon appeal overturned the hospitalization decision, and Boltykhov was released.

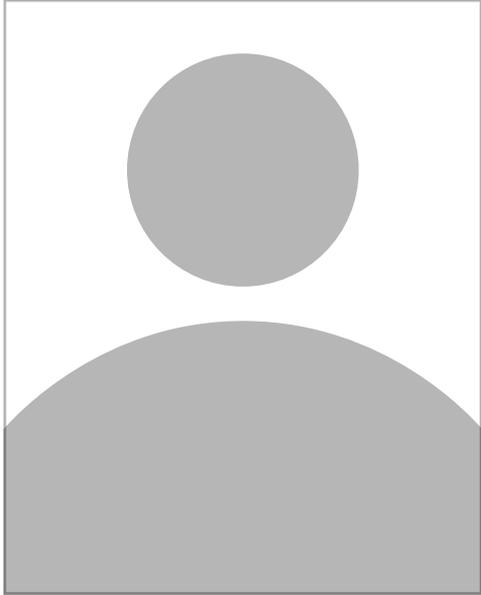


# IVAN BRIUROSH

In May 2018, Ivan Briurosh, age 29, a senior police lieutenant in the Interior Department of the Sverdlov Region was hospitalized directly from his shift with a diagnosis of “chronic polyneuropathy” (injury to the peripheral nerve system) with damage to the right side of his body – his right arm and leg were paralyzed. After treatment, according to law, Briurosh was supposed to be declared disabled and dismissed from the Interior Ministry with the relevant compensation. However, despite the fact that Briurosh could not move about without a cane even after recovery, and could not write with his right hand, a military physicians’ commission placed his diagnosis under doubt and refused to grant Briurosh disabled status. He was sent on leave, during which he once again wound up in the hospital, where the diagnosis of “neuropathy” was confirmed.

Several days after returning to service from vacation, Briurosh once again fell ill and was hospitalized after which he was sent to Moscow for “examination” – for some reason to the psychiatric department of the Interior Ministry Central Hospital. There, the semi-paralyzed Briurosh began to be “treated” with neuroleptics from the very first day; moreover, he was not informed of the name of the neuroleptic. He was held in a locked wing, and as he described it, “the grounds of the hospital were surrounded by a high fence with barbed wire. There were cameras nearly every 25 meters.”

Briurosh was discharged after a month, after which he was fired from the Interior Ministry “due to loss of confidence,” which does not grant him the right to receive a disability pension.



# GENNADY BUKHAROV

A resident of Moscow, Gennady Bukharov was detained at the Federal Security Service (FSB) building on Lubyanka Square during his single-person picket, which he began on June 24, 2020 on the day that the Victory Parade was held in Red Square. By order of the Simonovsky Court in Moscow, Bukharov was sent to the Alexeyev Psychiatric Hospital for involuntary treatment. Later he was transferred to Psychiatric Hospital No. 13 in Moscow.

At a trial on July 6, the judge refused on procedural grounds to review the merits of the case of Bukharov's involuntary hospitalization. A new trial has taken place, but its outcome is not known, and it is not known how much time Bukharov has spent in the psychiatric hospital.



# OLGA CHURIKOVA

**Olga Churikova, age 80, a resident of the village of Manushkino in the Chekhov District of the Moscow Region, was detained at the Meshcherskoye Station by a detachment of police headed by Col. Andrei Bolshakov, chief of police of the Chekhov District. The reason for the detention was a hunger strike Churikova had declared, joining the protests of residents of Manushkino, who had long been trying to close a garbage dump on the outskirts of town. At the station, Chirkova also handed out flyers protesting the use of the garbage site.**

Churikova suffered bruises when detained by police (recorded by a medical examination); moreover, she lost a little cross and gold chain she had worn, which she reported to the investigative committee. From the police station, Churkova was sent to the in-patient psychiatric clinic under the pretext she “must have a cardiogram and lower her blood pressure.” Churikova did not receive any treatment but spent two days in the psychiatric clinic.



# VIKTOR FEDOSEYEV

A native of Khabarovsk, 24-year-old Viktor Fedoseyev was detained on September 9, 2018 in Moscow, where he resided, after a mass protest against a draft law on raising the pension age. According to the investigation, during the action, Fedoseyev punched a police officer in the ear (Art. 318, part 1 of the Criminal Code, “use of force, non-threatening to life or health, against a representative of authority”).

The defense demonstrated that the accused was himself beaten by policemen – Fedoseyev displayed large bruises on his arms in court – and apparently suffered a concussion, which led to memory loss. Fedoseyev behaved erratically in court; he could not remember where he lived, although a medical evaluation was not made. Fedoseyev did not give testimony during the investigation, citing Art. 51 of the Constitution regarding self-incrimination.

Before that, Fedoseyev had never seen a psychiatrist and was not registered in a psychiatric dispensary. However, in February 2019, based on a forensic psychiatric examination, he was declared insane. In April of the same year, the court ordered that Fedoseyev had to receive compulsory treatment (the court session was held in the absence of the defendant).

Fedoseyev stayed in the regional clinical psychiatric hospital No. 2 of the city of Khabarovsk until September 7, 2020.

In January 2021, Fedoseyev’s complaint was considered by the ECHR. The court concluded that the Russian side violated Fedoseyev’s right to an urgent court review of the legality of his detention (Part 4 of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights). Fedoseyev was awarded compensation in the amount of 3,700 euros.



# ALEXANDER GABYSHEV

**The case of Alexander Gabyshev has become one of the best known in Russia, and it graphically demonstrates how modern abuses of psychiatry repurpose the repressive Soviet past, adapting it to modern judicial realities.**

Alexander Gabyshev was born in 1968 in Yakutsk and is an ethnic Yakut. He was educated as a historian, although for ideological reasons, he earned a living as a simple worker his whole life. In the early 2000s, Gabyshev began to study shamanism, which to this day is still practiced in remote areas of Yakutia. In the summer of 2018, Gabyshev set off on foot on a pilgrimage to Moscow for the purpose of conducting a “shamanic ritual to exorcise Vladimir Putin” in Red Square. In Gabyshev’s opinion, Putin is a demon, which Nature abhors. Wherever Putin appears, various disasters occur – thus Nature is cleansing itself of his influence. Only a shaman is strong enough to cope with a demon. Gabyshev calls himself a shaman warrior, and he considers it his job to restore popular rule and harmony in Russia.

Gabyshev’s first pilgrimage ended rather quickly – his dog was hit by a car and needed treatment. In the spring of 2019, Gabyshev once again headed to Moscow from Siberia on foot. He walked along the sides of highways with a cart loaded with necessities, including a yurt for camping.

“Gabyshev’s Pilgrimage to Moscow” attracted a wave of interest, both in the media and on social networks as well as locally, and dozens of people began to join him along the way. At the appearance of the “shaman,” crowds would gather in rallies at which Gabyshev spoke and made political statements. According to Gabyshev, he intended to use exclusively peaceful methods: “In his words, in order to exorcise Putin, he would light a campfire in Red Square, right before the Kremlin Wall. According to Yakut traditions, he would pour kumys [fermented mare’s milk] into the fire and throw in a horsehair, and would bang on a leather tambourine, and say a prayer, after which Putin would come to his senses and quietly submit his resignation.” As Gabyshev said, “democracy must be without fear. People are afraid to talk, they are afraid they will be fired, and lose their income, Government power in our country is simply boundless, and demonic.”

In September 2019, Gabyshev was detained by the police on the border of the Irkutsk Region and sent back to Yakutsk. There, he underwent a psychiatric examination and was pronounced mentally ill in October 2019. At that time, as Gabyshev's lawyer, Olga Timofeyeva has indicated, no criminal charges had been made against him.

In December 2019, Gabyshev once again began his "pilgrimage to Moscow." Within two days he was detained (along with 10 of his supporters) and charged with resisting police. Later, Gabyshev's lawyer submitted a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights regarding the legality of his detention and the violation of his right to a fair trial.

On May 12, 2020, Gabyshev was once again arrested – he was detained in his own home, after which he was forcibly hospitalized in the Yakutia Republic Psychoneurological Clinic. Officers from the psychiatric emergency service and at least 20 officers of Rosgvardiya (the Russian National Guard) took part in his detention. Despite the fact that the law requires a court order for involuntary hospitalization within 48 hours of arrest, the formal ruling was made three weeks later. The court explained its motivation as "a reassessment (by Gabyshev) of his personality." Then-mayor of Yakutsk, Sardan Avksentyeva, Viktor Gubarev, vice-speaker of the State Assembly of Yakutia, and Fedot Tumusov, deputy of the Russian Federation State Duma (the lower house of parliament) publicly criticized Gabyshev's involuntary hospitalization. At that time, Gabyshev was acknowledged as a political prisoner by the Memorial Human Rights Center. Gabyshev was released in July 2020. For the two months of his hospitalization, Gabyshev was not once permitted to leave the building for a walk.

On January 27, 2021, Gabyshev was once again forcibly detained at his home and sent to the Yakutia Republic Psychoneurological Clinic. Several days before that, Gabyshev had announced that he intended to set off for Moscow once again. More than 50 Rosgvardiya officers took part in his arrest. As one of them reported at the trial, the question was even raised of murdering Gabyshev. As the guard said, the commanders had given them permission to shoot Gabyshev, but they decided not to do that because Gabyshev "was gifted and sociable".

On January 29, 2021, a number of cultural figures issued an appeal demanding the release of Gabyshev. They noted that regardless of what people might think of his decision to make a pilgrimage to Moscow, freedom of movement for citizens of Russia had not yet been abolished. The authors of the letter appealed to "everyone who could help release Gabyshev and draw attention to the revival of the practice of punitive psychiatry." The appeal was signed by writers Svetlana Alexievich, Nobel Prize laureate; Alexander Gelman, playwright; Lev Rubinshtein, poet; and Anton Dolin, movie critic; as well as Elena Koreneva, actress; Lev Shlosberg, politician; and others – 19 in total.

In February, the court ruled in favor of the petition by the psychiatric clinic doctors to hospitalize Gabyshev involuntarily. In justification, the clinic's doctors indicated that Gabyshev had "once again begun making loud statements to the media." Later, a criminal case regarding the "use of force against a government representative" was opened (this was when Gabyshev was detained) and thus the case went from an administrative jurisdiction to a criminal one. According to the indictment under Art. 318 of the Criminal Code, upon arrest at his home, Gabyshev had injured an officer of the Rosgvardiya with a homemade deadly weapon (the reference is to a ritual shamanic sword; the material evidence submitted was the Rosgvardiya officer's pants, which had been ripped with a sharp instrument. There are also bloodstains in the home, but a forensic analysis was not conducted to determine whose blood it was).

Simultaneously, Gabyshev was charged under Art. 280 of the Criminal Code ("incitement of extremist activity"). In March, a forensic psychological and psychiatric evaluation at the same Yakutia Psychoneurological Clinic pronounced Gabyshev unfit to stand trial for these charges.

In 2021, unlike his previous hospitalizations, Gabyshev immediately began being "cured" with large doses of neuroleptics. A female relative who visited him on April 2 reported that Gabyshev complained of insomnia and frequent fainting spells after the hospitalization. During one of her visits, he began to shiver so violently that the orderlies were forced to carry him back to the ward. The relative also reported the Gabyshev had been given a short haircut, against his will and against Yakut religious tradition.

In June, Gabyshev's sister said that the psychiatric clinic had "lost" Gabyshev's telephone – which was the only way to keep in touch with him (because of the pandemic, visits were not allowed). After the sister brought him a new telephone, she was able to speak with Gabyshev. He reported that he was not even being allowed walks, and could use the phone only once a week. Moreover, his dosage of neuroleptics was being increased. In their first conversation, Gabyshev had said he was being given "a double dose". He constantly complained of weakness, dizziness, and sleepiness.

During the court proceeding on July 8, Gabyshev fell ill; he became dizzy and began to shake heavily, and an ambulance was called to the courthouse, which recorded a sharp drop in his blood pressure. The trial was postponed for that reason.

On July 26, a hearing took place at the Yakutsk City Court which pronounced Gabyshev unfit to stand trial and ruled that he be sent for involuntary treatment in an "in-patient psychiatric hospital under intensive observation" (known as STIN, the modern Russian acronym for the psychiatric prisons used in the Soviet era to incarcerate dissidents). The court also ordered Gabyshev to be held in prison before transport to the STIN, and he was sent to the investigation-isolation prison of the city of Yakutsk. Presumably, Gabyshev will be convoyed to the STIN in Novosibirsk.



# IGOR GORLANOV

Igor Gorlanov, a resident of Novokuznetsk was detained while single-person picketing in Moscow at the building of the Presidential Administration in December 2020. He went out to picket in order to draw attention to the problem of orphans who, upon being released from children's homes, cannot obtain an apartment, although it is due them by law. (Gorlanov, himself an orphan, tried to get an apartment for several years).

Gorlanov was taken from the police precinct to the Gannushkin Psychiatric Hospital, and on 30 December, to the Preobrazhensky Court in Moscow, which ordered involuntary treatment for him – although before that, Gorlanov had never been to a psychiatrist or had been on the psychiatric registry. Before the court hearing, Gorlanov received an injection of a neuroleptic, so he had no recollection of either how the trial proceeded, or even where it took place (according to Gorlanov, the trial took place at the Gannushkin Hospital but records show it took place in the courthouse).

Soon, Gorlanov was transferred from the Gannushkin Hospital to the psychiatric hospital in Kemerovo; a week later he was sent from there to a psychiatric hospital in Novokuznetsk. In late January, he was released. On May 28, upon appeal, the Moscow City Court declared the placement of Gorlanov in a psychiatric hospital to have been unlawful.



# ALBERT GURDJIAN

**A resident of Nizhny Novgorod, Albert Gurdjian (born 1974) is an activist in the political movement Artpodgotovka [Bombardment] and was also well known as a video blogger, openly criticizing the corruption and unlawful actions of the local authorities.**

In January 2017, after a report on the local television program Kstati [Incidentally] about an intoxicated judge who shot his non-lethal weapon at a woman walking her dog in the street, Gurdjian wrote a comment on an Internet forum in which he called the judicial community “an OGP [organized crime group] worthy of the maximum [capital] punishment or a prison term.” The prosecutor’s office perceived this as “denigration of the dignity of a group of persons based on affiliation to a social group (employees of judicial agencies of the Russian Federation)” and opened a criminal case under Art. 282 of the Criminal Code (“incitement of hatred or enmity or denigration of human dignity”).

Later, in Gurdjian’s posts on social networks, a statement was discovered which then triggered a new criminal case against him under Art. 205.2 (“public justification of terrorism”). In this post, Gurdjian commented on the crash of a flight to Syria (in which the entire Russian Army orchestra [the Alexander Ensemble] was killed) and claimed it would be good to “blast Sechin’s yacht.” (Igor Sechin is the general director of the state oil company Rosneft, well known as a close friend to President Putin and one of the major figures of corruption in Russia.)

In a search of Gurdjian’s home, a signals pistol (without ammunition) was found, along with a fountain pen, in which a video-recording device was installed (the sale and possession of such items are banned under Arts. 222 and 138.1 of the Criminal Code – “illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, possession, transport or carrying of weapons” and “illegal trafficking in special technical devices intended for clandestine receipt of information”).

On February 11, Gurdjian was arrested, pronounced unfit to stand trial after an in-patient forensic psychiatric evaluation and in July 2017, was placed in a psychiatric hospital in Kazan. In December 2017, Gurdjian escaped from the hospital, but was detained two days later in his home and later sent to the Kazan STIN (the first of the notorious special psychiatric hospitals of the Soviet Union). Gurdjian remains there to date.

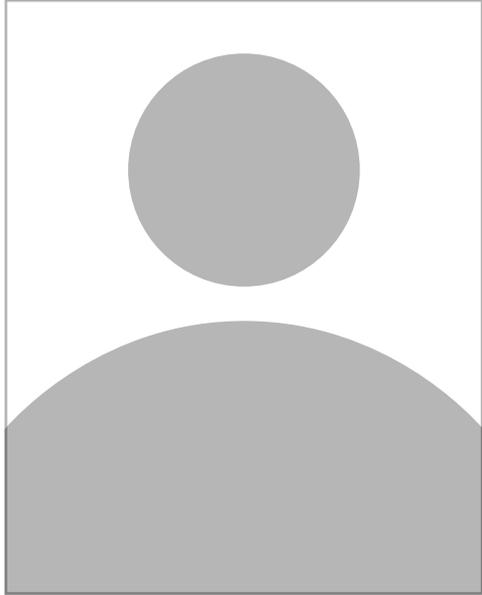


# VASILY KOSTYLYOV

In March 2019, a court ordered involuntary treatment for 36-year-old Vasily Kostilyov. He had been detained at the same protest against pension reform on September 9 as Fedoseyev. Kostilyov holds a higher degree and had previously resided in the Moscow suburbs. He is married, has a child, and worked as a site manager at Krokus, a large firm.

Kostilyov repeatedly took part in protests (although he had never been detained). In a video from the September 9 demonstration, Kostilyov can be seen actively taking part, calling on participants to link arms in a line. Then the OMON (riot police) is seen charging him, beating him with clubs. Kostilyov also appeared in court in torn clothing.

Kostilyov was charged under Art. 318, part 1 (“use of force not threatening to life or health, against a government representative”). Previously, Kostilyov had never sought psychiatric treatment and was not on the psychiatric register. Kostilyov underwent compulsory treatment for 16 months and was discharged from the psychiatric hospital in December 2020.



# ALEXANDER KOVALENKO

In August 2020, the 1st Western District Military Court sent Alexander Kovalenko, 68, a pensioner, for involuntary treatment. Kovalenko was charged with “public justification of terrorism” (Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code). The pretext for the prosecution was Kovalenko’s post on the social network Vkontakte where he approved the terrorist attack on the FSB building in Arkhangelsk (see the case of Dmitry Nadein).

In his post, Kovalenko called the terrorist “a hero of the new Russia” and thanked him for his “self-sacrifice.” All of seven people were subscribed to Kovalenko’s account on Vkontakte, and the criminal post received 158 views (including those of the search system robots); it had one “like.”

Given that Kovalenko suffers from cancer, the military court ordered ambulatory involuntary treatment for him – otherwise, Kovalenko would not have been able to receive treatment in a cancer clinic.



# NIKOLAI LIKHANOV

A civic activist from Chita, Nikolai Likhanov was sent to a psychiatric hospital for involuntary treatment after he started a movement to obtain more rights for the Zabaykalsky Territory in relation to the federal center in Moscow. As his brother Anatoly said, “We are trying to obtain greater independence for ourselves from the federal center because the region now is like a federal colony.” Likhanov also demanded the resignation of the mayor of the city of Chita and wrote statements to state agencies protesting corruption among regional energy monopolists, who imposed high prices on electricity.

On February 20, 2017, Likhanov was detained at his home by police officers in masks with machine guns, who took him to the police precinct and from there to the Kandinsky Territory Clinical Psychiatric Hospital. The pretext was a statement made by a dozen officials of the regional administration who claimed Lukhanov “threatened them with a lawsuit.” The administration officials also claimed that Likhanov “comes to [the administration] once a week, talks loudly, and says that ‘all of you should be fired.’” They also reported that Likhanov “moves chairs around” in the administration’s offices. (As it was discovered in court, not all the authors of the statements had even seen Likhanov; at least one of the administration officials wrote a statement simply at the request of her bosses).

At the psychiatric hospital, an evaluation was immediately conducted, and a petition was made to the court for involuntary hospitalization. Likhanov refused to speak with doctors since the conversation was not being filmed or recorded, and his representative was not allowed to be present during the examination.

Two days later, the Chernovsky District Court ruled to involuntarily hospitalize Likhanov. Until March 14, Likhanov was in the hospital, although no psychotropic drugs were administered to him. After Likhanov’s case was publicized, upon appeal, the Territory court overturned the decision of the district court and released Likhanov.



# YUNUS MASHARIPOV

A Crimean Tatar, Yunus Masharipov (born in 1964) resided in Yalta and was known as a human rights advocate and activist who spoke out against the annexation of Crimea and the repression of Crimean Tatars. Masharipov was arrested in September 2017 on charges of preparing and storing explosive substances (Articles 223 and 222 of the Criminal Code). According to the indictment, Masharipov prepared explosive devices which he intended to use to blow up a power line in the suburbs of Sevastopol.

During the preliminary investigation, Masharipov confessed his guilt, and his video confession was published by the FSB. Later, Masharipov claimed that he made his confession under torture and requested that a statement to that effect be published in the media. As Masharipov indicated, he “personally experienced the whole horror of brutal methods of torture by officers of the FSB, with manifestations of sadism.” As Masharipov described it, FSB officers “forced him to squat on his heels in handcuffs in an uncomfortable pose with outstretched arms and fingers spread. After I could stand it no longer, I fell on my side, and an FSB officer began to kick me in the kidneys. He put a condom on a wooden stick, ran it over my lips, trying to stick it into my mouth through my teeth. They forced me to kneel, twisted my arms behind my back and pressed down on the handcuffs with their feet. They forced me to lie naked on a cold floor, [...], and burned the palms of my hands with cigarette lighters.” He was also tortured with electro-shock.

Subsequently, the court cleared Masharipov of the charge of manufacturing explosives. Despite this, in November 2018, he was sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment. The appellate court overturned the sentence, however, issuing a ruling under which Masharipov was pronounced unfit to stand trial regarding the charges filed and sent for involuntary treatment at an in-patient psychiatric hospital under intensive observation (STIN) in the city of Kamyshin in the Volgograd Region. Masharipov is held there to date.



# ALEXANDER MERKULOV

An anarchist and LGBT activist from St. Petersburg, Alexander Merkulov was sent in October 2020 from an investigation-isolation prison to a psychiatric hospital for in-patient forensic evaluation, where he spent 30 days. Merkulov had been arrested in July 2020 on charges of “public justification of terrorism” (Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code). The charges stemmed from Merkulov’s posts on social networks regarding the terrorist attack on the FSB building in Arkhangelsk in 2018 (see Dmitry Nadein). During the investigation, an FSB investigator directly threatened Merkulov with a psychiatric examination and a diagnosis of mental illness if he continued to deny his guilt.

Merkulov was pronounced fit to stand trial after an examination and was transferred to house arrest. He pled guilty and in June 2021 was sentenced to a fine of 200,000 rubles (USD 2,698).



# DMITRY NADEIN

Dmitry Nadein, a programmer and resident of Irkutsk, was arrested for a comment made on the social network VKontakte on February 4, 2021. In his comment, Nadein reacted to a terrorist attack that took place in 2018 in the FSB building in Arkhangelsk, committed by a 17-year-old terrorist. In response to another participant in the chat, Nadein wrote: “All of your buildings should be destroyed down to the last brick.” On that basis, a criminal case was opened against him under Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code (“public justification of terrorism”), and Nadein was arrested.

A forensic psychiatric examination conducted in an investigative-isolation prison in Irkutsk found Nadein unfit to stand trial, with a diagnosis of “schizophrenia.” In June, Nadein was transported to Khabarovsk in secret, without notifying his relatives or lawyers, to a hearing at a military tribunal (which has jurisdiction over cases under Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code). Later, it was determined that Nadein was transported by mistake since the tribunal’s hearing was supposed to be on-site and should have taken place in Irkutsk. By decision of the First Eastern Military Court Nadein was sent for compulsory treatment in a psychiatric hospital with strict observation (STIN)



# IVAN NOGOVITSYN

A civic activist from Yekaterinburg, Ivan Nogovitsyn was arrested for joining protests against the construction of a Russian Orthodox cathedral on the site of a popular park in the city on the river embankment near the Drama Theater (construction was halted as a result of the protests). Nogovitsyn was charged with “calls for mass disorders” (Art. 212.2 of the Criminal Code).

Nogovitsyn was arrested in March 2020 and placed in Investigation Isolation Prison No. 1 in Yekaterinburg, where he was injected with neuroleptics due to his protests against the administration. According to Nogovitsyn, he “could have refused, but he consented because they threatened to tie him down on his bed.”

In March 2021, Nogovitsyn was sent for in-patient forensic psychiatric evaluation, the results of which are not known.

As his lawyer Roman Kachanov reported, the practice of using psychotropic substances on prisoners at Investigation Isolation Prison No. 1 in Yekaterinburg was a frequent occurrence. Kachanov described an incident where a prisoner, after being injected with neuroleptics, began to display hyperactivity and could not sleep. He was consequently tied to his bed for more than 24 hours. At the prisoner’s request, one of his cellmates untied him so that he could go to the toilet, after which both of them were punished and tied to their beds.

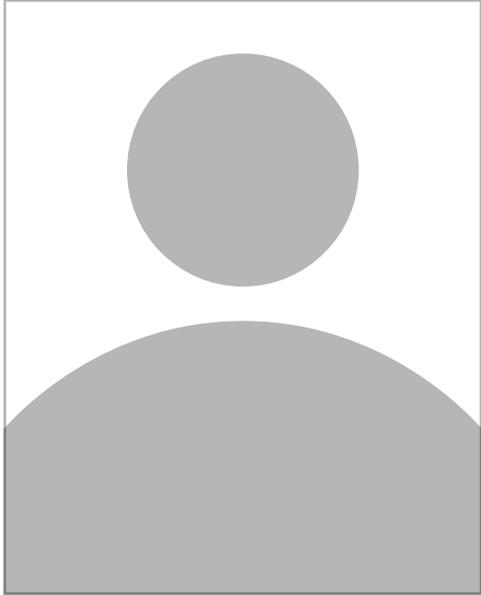


# ANDREI NOVOSELOV

An activist of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Andrei Novoselov from the Perm Territory was sent for an in-patient psychiatric evaluation on June 10, 2021. Novoselov was accused of “disrespect of the court” (Art. 297 of the Criminal Code). The grounds for the charge were Novoselov’s statement at a Territory court in which he complained about actions by court bailiffs in collecting a fine from him. Previously in 2018, Novoselov had been fined by the Chaikovskiy City Court for “public demonstration of Nazi symbolism” (in fact, this involved a post on social networks of scenes from a Soviet TV series devoted to World War II, with actors portraying Nazis in uniform).

In 2019, the Perm Territory Court pronounced the complaint against the bailiffs to be lawful but left the judgement of the Chaikovskiy Court in force. In turn, Judge Irina Konovalova of the Chaikovskiy court submitted a request to open a criminal case against Novoselov, since she found evidence of “disrespect to the court” (Art. 297). In his complaint, Novoselov claimed that Konovalova had poor knowledge of the law and the Russian language.

Police brought Novoselov to the forensic psychiatry department of the psychiatric hospital with a high temperature, and for three days Novoselov maintained a hunger strike, demanding medical assistance. It is not known how long he remained as an in-patient; the hospital’s conclusion is also not known, and the court sentence in the criminal case has not yet been handed down.



# YEGOR PANIN

Starting from the age of 15, Yegor Panin, a resident of Orenburg, went through several outpatient and in-patient courses of a “cure for homosexuality.” Panin lived with his mother and younger brother, and in 2014, his mother read his messages on social networks and found out that Yegor is gay. She used her personal connections to get help from a psychiatrist whom she knew personally, Dr. Alexander Pershin, former chief physician at the Nizhegorodskaya Clinical Psychiatric Hospital No. 1. Dr. Pershin forced Yegor to take neuroleptics, first in tablet form, then through injections.

In January 2015, Panin ran away from home and lived for several weeks at a friend’s house in the Moscow suburbs. Meanwhile, Panin’s mother filed a report with the Investigative Committee (IC) about the “kidnapping” of Yegor, after which IC officers detained Panin and sent him home. Panin once again ran away from home and found shelter at Lastochka [Sparrow], a social rehabilitation center for minors in Nizhny Novgorod. On March 10, his mother arrived there and, with the consent of the center’s management, Panin was taken by orderlies to Psychiatric Hospital No. 2.

At the hospital, a lawyer from Agora, the international human rights group, tried to visit Panin, but the administration would not allow them to meet. According to Panin, during the first two weeks at the hospital, no one talked to him at all, but as soon as his hospitalization became known via the media and social networks, he immediately began receiving large doses of neuroleptics, and “was like a vegetable.”

A month later – and two days after his lawyer’s failed attempt at a visit – Panin was discharged, after first being forced to sign his consent to hospitalization after the fact and was transferred for treatment as a daily out-patient. According to Panin himself, there were many documents, but under the influence of neuroleptics, he was in no condition to read them. At home, Panin was forced to take neuroleptics, and in October 2015 he once again fled and went to St. Petersburg where he tried to find help at

various LGBT assistance groups. On October 20, Panin was summoned for interrogation by the St. Petersburg Investigative Committee in the case of his “kidnapping.” His mother arrived, and with the consent of the investigator, took Panin home.

In December 2015, Panin turned 18 years old, and became an adult, however, under pressure from his mother, he was forced to continue taking the neuroleptic drugs prescribed to him by Dr. Alexander Pershin, the psychiatrist. According to Panin, once again “I was drooling and feeling like a vegetable.” In October 2017, upon learning that both the Panin brothers intended once again to run away from home, their mother summoned the psychiatric emergency service, the police, and Dr. Pershin. As Yegor Panin said, “they began to twist our arms behind our backs, they put on handcuffs, we yelled, and my brother was swearing obscenities so that they would stop and not beat us, and then he was tasered. Then in the ambulance, we were beaten, and then I was tasered.” Yegor Panin was sent to Psychiatric Hospital No. 2, where he spent five days; his younger brother spent more than a week there.

In November 2017, Yegor Panin once again ran away from home, and his whereabouts are not known at this time. Officially, according to the Investigative Committee, he is on the wanted list.



# VADIM OSIPOV

**A cadet at the Mozhaisky Military Space Academy, Vadim Osipov was accused of “abetting terrorist activity” (Art. 201.5, part 1 of the Criminal Code) and “preparation of a terrorist act” (Art. 30, part 1; Art. 205, part 3, point b).**

Vadim Osipov was born in 1998 in Orenburg. He was raised in an orphanage (he had no father, and his mother suffered from alcoholism). In 2011, Osipov entered the Orenburg Presidential Cadet Academy, and in 2016, Osipov became a cadet at the Mozhaisky Military Space Academy in St. Petersburg.

Osipov did not like his studies in the cartography department; he wanted to serve in troops that combat terrorist attacks and prevent them. He tried to find ways to transfer to another military academy, but the rules did not permit this. Osipov studied terrorist attacks and looked for ways to prevent them. For these purposes, he downloaded a book from the Internet called ABCs of Domestic Terrorism (a version of the well-known *The Anarchist Cookbook*).

In the spring of 2017, Osipov told a classmate how a terrorist attack could be made on the Academy barracks, and the next day, he sketched a diagram. The piece of paper got into the hands of a teacher, who then talked with Osipov to determine his intent. Osipov expressed his opinion about the state of security at the Academy. The conversation ended with that, but the teacher turned in the diagram to the FSB.

The FSB officers from the very beginning proceeded as if Osipov himself had intended to commit the terrorist attack described, despite the fact that he had said outright that he considered his idea interesting “since it could later be used to detect flaws in the system, for example, in the daily routine and so on.”

On April 9, Vadim Osipov was detained, and the next day put under arrest for two months. At the investigation-isolation prison, he was twice examined by psychiatrists who discovered “accentuations of character” – i.e., vividly expressed personality traits, close to the limits of the accepted norm. The conclusion stated that “one of the clearly expressed traits of the person under

examination is his judgment, the tendency to make sense of the surrounding reality in terms of logical patterns, the tendency to look for unconventional solutions.” The court ordered a new evaluation for Osipov at the Defense Ministry’s 111th Main State Center for Forensic Medical and Criminal Evaluations in Moscow. There, he was given the diagnosis of “schizotypal personality disorder” (F21.8 under the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision).

In May 2019, the court pronounced Osipov unfit to stand trial and ordered involuntary treatment for him in a psychiatric hospital. After this, Osipov was transferred to Psychiatric Hospital No. 5 in the Chekhov District of the Moscow Region. There, he was given neuroleptics, including haloperidol. As Osipov wrote in a letter, “I was bound so tightly, that I wasn’t able to move my hands normally, and got around in a fetal position. Only my legs moved; at the peak of my treatment, the binding reached up to my jaw. My mouth was constantly open, I could not close it, only if I gritted my teeth by force.” After he requested help, Osipov was tied to his bed.

Later, Osipov was transferred to the psychiatric hospital in Orenburg (where he was born); there is no information about his location at the present time.



# YURI SAVELYEV

Yuri Savelyev is a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses Church, which has been declared an "extremist organization" in the Russian Federation since 2017 and is banned. Yuri Savelyev, 66, who lived in Novosibirsk, was arrested in 2018 on charges of "organizing the activities of an extremist organization" (part 1 of Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code). In December 2020, the court sentenced Savelyev to six years in a high-security colony.

The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses called Savelyev's sentence "absurd". A spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses, Jarrod Lopez, also said that the verdict "defies international human rights norms."

Savelyev was serving a term in colony No. 5 in the Altai Territory. In early August, the head of the colony invited him to sign an empty application form with a request for treatment, which Savelyev refused, since he felt quite healthy. Nevertheless, on August 24, he was transferred to the Medical Correctional Institution No. 1 in the city of Barnaul. This is a colony that is specially designed for the forced treatment of prisoners from alcoholism and drug addiction. Upon arrival there, Savelyev's notebooks with personal notes and the Bible were taken away from him.

The last time the lawyer visited Savelyev was on September 1, by that time no treatment has yet been applied to Savelyev. However, it is known that 100% of all prisoners in that institution are subjected to compulsory treatment with various psychotropic drugs.



# OKSANA SEMYKINA

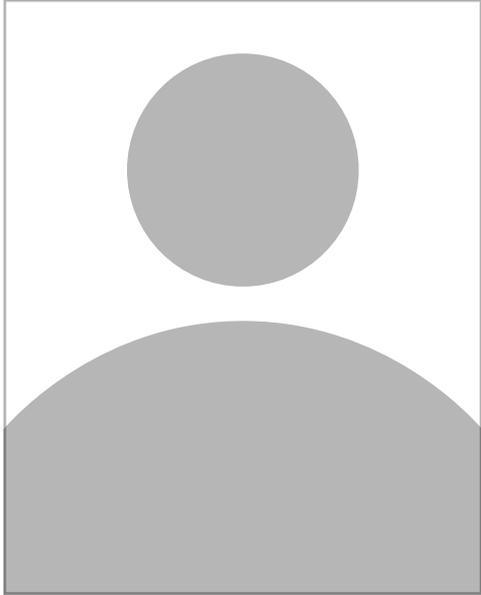
**Oksana Semykina, age 36, is a captain in the Interior Ministry, a dog handler, and a police officer in St. Petersburg. Semykina has served 15 years in the Interior Ministry and has earned many awards; she has been a multiple prize-winner and champion in all-Russian competitions of specialist dog handlers.**

Semykina complained to her bosses about the lack of days off and long hours of unpaid overtime and requested a transfer to another precinct in the Stavropol Territory (where her parents live, and where she had received permission for the transfer from the police chiefs in Stavropol).

On August 3, 2017, Semykina came to the building of the Interior Minister's Center for Canine Training to talk with the department head. After the conversation, however, the department head summoned the psychiatric emergency services. According to him, Semykina "behaved provocatively, and swore with obscenities," threatened to file criminal charges, and broke a button on a fire alarm.

The team from the psychiatric emergency service brought Semykina to the Alexeyev Hospital in Moscow, where she immediately began to be "treated" with large doses of haloperidol and other neuroleptics. For three days, her parents could not obtain any information about where their daughter was located, and the Alexeyev Hospital refused to provide information. According to her lawyer, a physicians' commission which examined Semykina after she was already under the influence of the neuroleptics concluded: "Oksana was in a terrible state, she could barely talk, her eyes were half-open, she had been injected with haloperidol and other medications which were not revealed to her or us in the name of health care privacy"

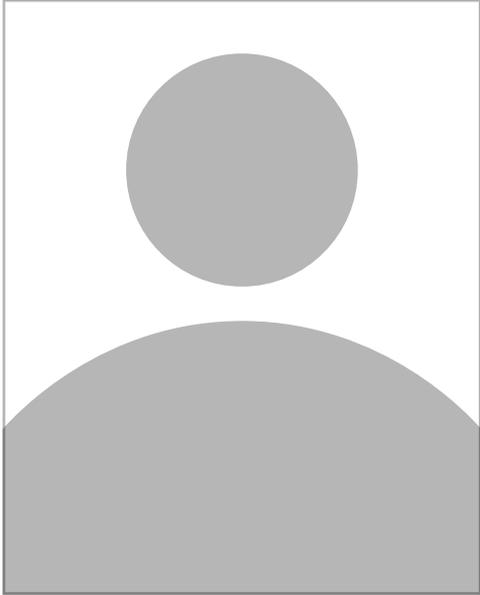
Likely the trial took place at this time which ruled that Semykina had to be involuntarily hospitalized for one month (under the influence of neuroleptics, she could not recall the trial). After 35 days in the psychiatric hospital under court order, Semykina was discharged.



# ANDREI SHASHERIN

A resident of Barnaul (in the Altai Territory), Andrei Shasherin was charged in July 2018 under Art. 148 (“harming the feelings of believers”) and Art. 282 (“incitement of hatred or enmity”) for his memes on the social network Vkontakte. Among them was the depiction of a Russian Orthodox Church priest with the caption “Have you sinned? Recite ‘Crimea is Ours’ three times.” (This is a reference to a slogan popular among Russian nationalists when Russia forcibly annexed Crimea, which is Ukrainian territory in 2014).

Shasherin is 38 years old, he supports a wife and a five-year-old son, and because Shasherin’s bank account has been frozen, he can’t use his bank card. After Shasherin refused to plead guilty in the case, the investigator ordered a forensic psychiatric evaluation for him. On July 24, the district court ruled that Shasherin must be placed under in-patient psychiatric care. The results of the examination and the outcome of the case are not known at this time.



# MAXIM SOKOLOV

A resident of the village of Starokushevskaya in the Krasnodar Territory, educated as a lawyer, Maxim Sokolov, 30, was charged in 2018 under two articles of the Criminal Code: “libel” (Art. 123.1) and “insult of a government representative” (Art. 319). The grounds for the libel case were Sokolov’s complaints made to state agencies officials of the Investigative Committee (IC) who refused to investigate a murder threat that Sokolov had received on his social network account. Sokolov accused an IC investigator of concealing other crimes committed on the network, including what Sokolov interpreted as child pornography (a new investigation confirmed this fact, but a criminal case was not opened for procedural reasons).

In March 2018, Sokolov summoned the police after people came to his home claiming to be employees of Rostelekom and asking for the log-in and password of his router. Sokolov refused to give them the password, after which the people left. But when Sokolov called the police, a lieutenant colonel who was head of the precinct arrived, along with other police officers. The officer demanded explanations from Sokolov as to why he had called the police. The conversation was apparently confrontational, but the police left without detaining Sokolov. It was only later that a criminal case was opened on the charge of insult to the police, based on a statement from the police lieutenant colonel.

In August 2018, Sokolov was sent for an in-patient forensic psychiatric hospital in Krasnodar, where he spent 26 days. An examination concluded that Sokolov suffers from “latent schizophrenia amid organic brain damage.” Sokolov pointed to inconsistencies in the evaluation report. His brain was not examined, and the report claimed his father had suffered from schizophrenia, although Sokolov never knew his father, and nothing about him is known at all. Sokolov had been registered for the draft as fit for military service and had never sought help from psychiatrists.

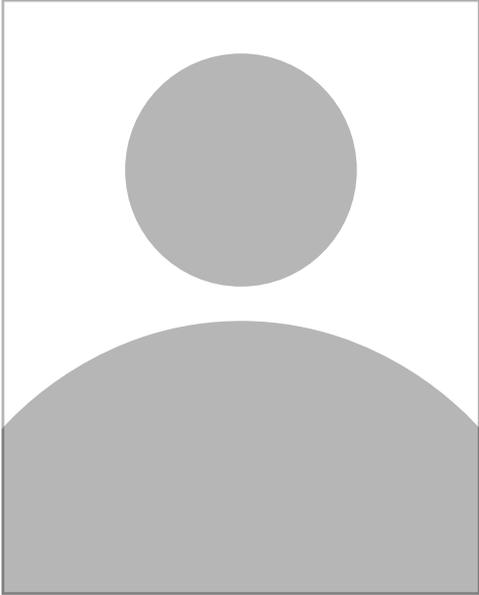
An independent evaluation conducted by Vladimir Mendelevich, a professor at Kazan Medical University, also indicated that the conclusion of the examination did not confirm the diagnosis established.

On December 11, 2018, a magistrate's court ruled in favor of involuntary hospitalization for Sokolov, although neither he nor his defense attorney was present at the hearing. They were both removed from the courtroom – Sokolov for protesting from his seat, and the lawyer on procedural grounds (since at the beginning of the hearing, Sokolov himself was in the courtroom, the relevant power of attorney for the lawyer to conduct the case at that time had not been filed).

In an appellate court review of the case in February 2019, the Shcherbinovsky District Court overturned the decision of the magistrate's court. The same court, in December 2019, ordered a repeat in-patient forensic psychiatric examination in St. Petersburg, which Sokolov underwent for a month. The new evaluation repeated the conclusion of the examination in Krasnodar, after which the Shcherbinovsky District Court in March 2020 ordered involuntary treatment. On June 4, Sokolov was detained by police officers and sent to Kushchevsky Specialized Psychiatric Hospital No. 3 (for the mentally ill who are a danger to society). By that time, the statute of limitations under Art. 128.1 had already expired.

In December 2020, the Kushchevsky District Court extended the period for Sokolov's involuntary treatment until June 8, 2021. According to available information, Sokolov continues to be held in Psychiatric Hospital No. 3.

If he had been declared fit to stand trial, under Art. 319, Sokolov could have been sentenced either to a fine or compulsory work for a period of no more than one year. In the opinion of Sokolov's lawyer, "he had written complaints for a long time, and judging from all accounts, the local authorities were fed up with him. In actuality, the use of measures of a medical nature, which turned out to be punitive psychiatry, was practiced here in the Soviet Union."



# PYOTR TROFIMOV

**Pyotr Trofimov was a participant in the Open Russia movement, which has been declared an “undesirable organization,” and whose members face criminal prosecution and imprisonment. He was detained by police at his home in St. Petersburg on June 14, 2018.**

The grounds for detention stemmed from a criminal case opened against Trofimov under Art. 330 of the Criminal Code (“abuse of rights”) in 2014. According to the indictment, Trofimov did not return some welding equipment to the management of a shipyard where he worked as a welder, for which he was personally liable. According to Trofimov, he was suddenly fired for attempting to organize a union at the shipyard, which meant he was unable to return the equipment on time (in any event, the statute of limitations on this case expired back in 2016).

Police took Trofimov for examination at City Psychiatric Hospital No. 6, where doctors reported that they were keeping him as an in-patient for 30 days. After a number of single-person picketings, as well as a group action by the Spring movement in defense of Trofimov in St. Petersburg on July 4, he was discharged (and pronounced fit to stand trial in the criminal case).



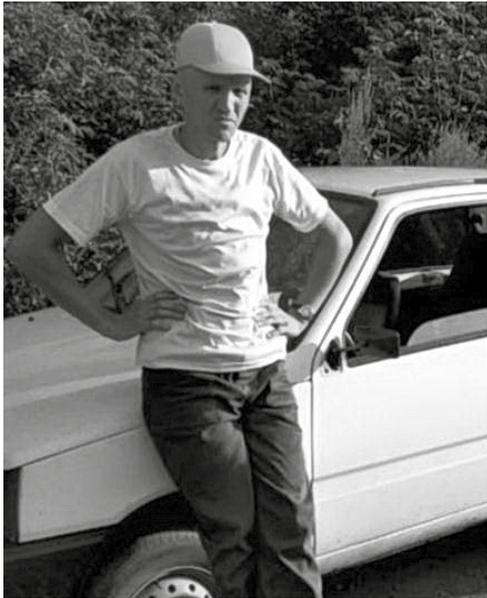
# PYOTR YABLONSKY

**Pyotr Yablonsky, a 20-year-old student from St. Petersburg was detained on the night of August 31, 2017 as he was leaving his home. The pretext for detaining him was his participation in online forums of the movement Artpodgotovka [Bombardment] and writing graffiti, in particular, "Putin Retire!"**

Yablonsky was handcuffed and beaten, and the beating continued at the police station until Yablonsky confessed he had written the graffiti. The next day, his home was searched, and later that same day he was sent to a psychiatric clinic for evaluation. To justify the detention, the police drew up a report claiming that Yablonsky had sworn obscenities in a public place. The doctor at the psychiatric clinic prescribed involuntary hospitalization in a psychiatric hospital (according to Yablonsky, the psychiatrist did not even talk to him).

Yablonsky was taken in via psychiatric ambulance to an in-patient clinic. (After discovering signs of beating, the ambulance medical personnel first took Yablonsky to a clinic, where an examination was made of his injuries, but the findings were sent for some reason to the same police department where Yablonsky was in fact beaten). Yablonsky was placed in the psychosomatic department of the Alexandrov Hospital in St. Petersburg.

There he remained until September 3, when doctors admitted that Yablonsky did not require either observation or treatment, and he was released.

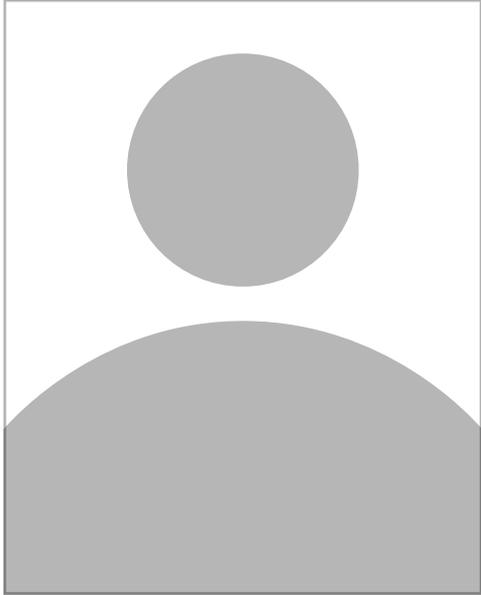


# EVGENY YUZHAKOV

**An environmental activist from the village of Rassvet in the Kemerovskaya Region, Evgeny Yuzhakov constantly staged protests against open-pit coal mining, which has worsened the region's already bad environmental situation.**

Several years ago, Yuzhakov returned from Novokuznetsk to his native village of Rassvet, where open-pit coal mining was underway nearby. Yuzhakov constantly wrote on social media and Internet forums about the environmental disaster caused by coal mining. (The coal mine in Rassvet is located a few hundred meters from people's homes).

On August 20, 2017, Yuzhakov began demonstrating on the highway with a poster, "We in Rassvet understand everything, you are only feeding your own children!" and covered the road with broken glass to stop the coal trucks. The security guards at the mine summoned the police, and Yuzhakov was brought to the village police department, where a citation was issued for an administrative misdemeanor. Later, Yuzhakov was released to go home. The next day, Yuzhakov drove up to the checkpoint of Energougol, a mining company, poured gasoline on himself, and locked himself in his car, demanding that the coal mine be closed. Police and emergency workers came to the scene; they broke the window, dragged Yuzhakov from the car, and admitted him involuntarily to Psychiatric Hospital No. 12. It is not known how long Yuzhakov has been undergoing involuntary treatment.



# NIKITA ZABAZNOV

A video blogger from Vladivostok, Nikita Zabaznov was sent to a psychiatric hospital for involuntary treatment in March 2020. The reason for the hospitalization was a video blog in which Zabaznov complained that in order to obtain a driver's license, a psychiatric hospital required him to pay 4,000 rubles. Technically, this cash was supposed to pay for "additional" services at the psychiatric clinic, whereas officially, this procedure was supposed to be free. Zabaznov spent 30 days in a Territory psychiatric hospital.

# Crimean Tatars

After the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian authorities began to systematically oppress Crimean Tatars, the indigenous colonized population of Crimea. More than 50 Crimean Tatars – activists of the national movement and Muslims – were prosecuted on charges of “public calls to carry out actions aimed at violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation” and “organization of the activity of a terrorist organization and participation in the activity of such an organization” (the authorities were referring to participation in Hizb-ut-tahir, which was declared a terrorist organization in the Russian Federation.)

Approximately half of those charged in these cases have undergone in-patient forensic psychiatric evaluations in Simferopol. Investigators directly threatened suspects who did not admit their guilt with psychiatric evaluations and being pronounced unfit to stand trial (see Yunus Masharipov). None of those sent by the investigators for evaluation had any indications they were mentally ill and had never been treated by a psychiatrist.

Ilmi Umerov, the leader of the Crimean Tatar movement, described the hospital stay for forensic psychiatric evaluation as “torture lasting a month.” Umerov has written that “a sane person is placed among actually chronically ill people. The treatment by the staff, except for the doctors, is the same as towards the [mentally] ill: the swearing and the shouts are identical.” The psychiatric wing suffers from overcrowding, the living conditions are worse than those in prison. The toilet was so filthy that Umerov could not use it and obtained the right as an exception to use the toilet for the medical personnel, and during hot weather, the cots are put outside for the night. OMON (riot troops) maintain order on the wing. According to Seyran Saliyev, who was sent for evaluation, “when you go out for a walk, or take ablutions [Muslim ritual before prayer], or you go to the kitchen, they accompany you with a rubber truncheon in their hands and anger in their eyes.”

Since 2017, among those who have been sent for forensic psychiatric evaluation are:

- Seyran Saliyev
- Server Mustafayev
- Server Zekiryayev
- Nariman Memedeminov

Memedeminov wrote that “the very fact of a sane person undergoing a psychological evaluation is pressure.” Memedeminov also reported that one of the psychiatrists admitted: “In general, I do not understand why you are being brought here? We look [at you] and see normal people, sane people, but they keep bringing you to us.”

All the Crimean Tatars were pronounced fit to stand trial for the charges brought against them (except for Yusup Masharipov, see above).

# Psychiatric Departments of Labor Camp Hospitals

The psychiatric departments of hospitals for inmates at prisons and labor camps remain secret facilities. The prisoners there are essentially deprived of communication with the outside world – correspondence is censored, visits from relatives are not allowed, even members of the Public Monitoring Commissions (PMC) of places of imprisonment are rarely able to obtain access. The oversight agencies of the Directorate of the Federal Corrections Service rarely inspect these departments (once in five years, as far as is known). There are no video cameras in the departments, which is compulsory for all places of confinement (the PMC proposed installing a video surveillance system at their own expense, but hospital management refused).

There is only one known case when members of the PMC were able to obtain access to the psychoneurological department of the Inter-Regional Tuberculosis Hospital No. 19 (MOTB-19) in the Rostov Region.

The reason for the visit to MOTB-19 was a statement from Ruslan Arapov, a prisoner in Investigative Isolation Prison No. 1 in Rostov-on-Don, who in September 2017, during a visit from members of the PMC, revealed injuries on his legs. According to Arapov, he suffered the wounds when tied to his bed for 71 days. PMC members observed that one of his wounds above the knee was about 15 centimeters in length; a second one, somewhat lower, was about 6 centimeters. Arapov reported that 19 patients at the psychoneurological department of MOTB-19 were regularly tied to their cots for several months at a time and were untied only during meals and for visits to the toilet. For the entire time they were bound, they were injected with neuroleptics.

That same month, the PMC obtained the right to visit MOTB-19. As one of them recounted, “we saw on one person’s back a bedsore that was such a hole that it was as if someone had shot him directly in the back...I have never seen such a thing before. There were seven people bound at the time of our visit. We asked them; one had not been untied for five days, another three days.” However, as the members of the PMC themselves acknowledged, “we could not manage to question many of them because they had been ‘shot up’ with drugs and were unable to talk.”

As the PMC discovered, other prisoners take advantage of these bound inmates. “It reaches the point of abuse – mental and sexual abuse. They spit in their mouths, in their food, and beat them. Or they take out their members and rub them around the prisoners’ mouths, over their faces – there’s a lot of that.” During a second visit to MOTB-19, members of the PMC saw a person with bedsores on his back, “large, almost down to the muscle,” recalls a PMC member. The prisoner described how “they don’t untie me and they torture me,” and that he had been placed in the hospital because he “did not want to fulfill the requirements” of officials from the Federal Corrections Service (FCS).

According to prisoners, the usual reason for internment in the MOTB-19 psychoneurological department is not a manifestation of psychopathology, but complaints to state agencies and protests. “Prisoners who have either quarreled with FCS officers or do not fulfill the demands made on them are sent to the MOTB-19 psychiatric wing,” Igor Omelchenko, a member of the PMC said. In his opinion, “the people who wind up on this wing are those who have harmed themselves or threatened someone, a lot could be written. There they are injected with medications, tied to their beds – by the arms and legs. People lay there from one to three months, they are fed little, they are all emaciated, their limbs atrophy...”

In April 2020, a 42-year-old prisoner named Roman Mikhailov was brought to the MOTB-19. He had been sentenced there for a murder threat (Art. 119 of the Criminal Code, punishable by up to two years imprisonment). On June 24, Mikhailov died, according to the autopsy, from “sepsis and phlegmon of the lumbar region.” His family believes that this was the result of wounds formed after being tied to his bed for a long period. His daughter, who saw him for the last time in court, says that Mikhailov weighed only weighed about 120 kilograms at the time. “When his body was turned over to me in June, I didn’t recognize him – he was entirely grey, with long fingernails on his hands, and was skin and bones. I only identified him from the tattoos on his arms.” (In early June, his lawyer had attempted to visit Mikhail, but was refused).

# Forced Sterilization of Mentally Ill Women

In 2020, there were reports of forced sterilization of women in a home for the elderly and disabled in Utkuss, a suburb of Yekaterinburg. By law, after reaching the age of 18, orphans have the right to obtain a separate apartment; however, this rule is rarely observed. Orphans are placed on a waiting list that can last for years until they receive a place in a boarding house for the disabled. Those who are mentally ill spend many years in such boarding houses.

As an official investigation established, since 2006, 15 women who were residing in the Uktuss home – all mentally ill orphans – were surgically sterilized by force. Some of them were sent for an operation without any explanation; others were threatened with being sent to a home for the disabled mentally ill where much worse conditions awaited them. As one victim, Olga Egorova recounted, the women were taken to Hospital No. 20 in Yekaterinburg – several at a time under the pretext of giving samples – but were then forced to give their written consent for sterilization. As Egorova reported, “I was yelled at; if you don’t want to do this, then you’ll go to another boarding house, the psychoneurological one!”

Anna Bakhteyeva, a patient at the home, was already pregnant at the time of sterilization. The father of the future child, named Vladimir, wanted to marry her and start a family, but authorities took advantage of the fact that Vladimir had gone to Yekaterinburg to apply for a wedding license, and sent Bakhteyeva for the operation. There she was given an abortion and sterilized.

Journalists discovered that in March 2019, one of the women died after the operation (the official cause of death is not known, but prior to her death, the woman suffered from pains in her abdomen). The year before, she had officially married, and her wedding was celebrated at the home.

After reports in the media, a government investigation was undertaken, leading to a criminal case being opened in November 2020. Its results are not known to this day.



Human Rights in Mental Health – FGIP is an international federation of not-for-profit organizations that promote humane, ethical and effective mental health care throughout the world. The organization aims to empower people and help build improved and sustainable services that are not dependent on continued external support. The defense of human rights in mental health care delivery is the cornerstone of our work. We consider it our prime obligation to speak out whenever and wherever human rights abuses in mental health practice occur, and work with local partners to amend the situation and make sure the human rights violations in question are discontinued. The basis in all our activities is partnership.

Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP was originally founded in 1980 as the “International Association on the Political Use of Psychiatry” (IAPUP) in response to the systematic political abuse of psychiatry in the USSR. It actively supported victims of such abuses and organized international campaigns to bring these abuses to an end. In 1991 it was renamed as Geneva Initiative on Psychiatry (GIP) and focused much of its work on supporting mental health reform in Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR. In 2005 it expanded its activities beyond that region, became active in Africa and Asia, and renamed itself into Global Initiative on Psychiatry. At this moment the Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry has member organizations in Bulgaria, Georgia, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Since the resumption of political abuse of psychiatry in former Soviet republics, and in particular in Russia, it has published several reports on new cases of political abuse. The latest, “psychiatry as a Tool of Coercion in Post-Soviet Countries”, covered the period 2012-2017. This report focuses entirely on Russia, where the number of cases continues to increase.



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